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DEFINING ARCTICITY – PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON TOURISTS' UNDESTANDING OF ARCTIC

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to find out what kind of definitions do international tourists give to the term "arctic", how they comprehend and describe it and what images does it bring to their minds. The research question in my study is: How is the term "arctic" colloquially defined by tourists and what types of meanings do they give to it? I will also examine how do these definitions differ from the definitions given to "arctic" in varying other fields of research, and how do the representations and marketing of the Arctic differ from people's own perceptions and definitions.

Data collected by interviewing tourists in Rovaniemi, Finnish Lapland, is examined in a theoretical framework of phenomenology and analyzed using the analytical method of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The study is considered to relate to psychology as individual understandings are the object of study. The theoretical discussions of meaning generation and sense of place are in this research considered to connect the theoretical side of this study to the empirical. In this study, the term *arcticity* is used as a descriptive word for something perceived to be "arctic".

The results of this study suggest that tourists understand the term "arctic" most commonly in relation to the elements of winter and cold weather, arctic animals and nature, and the geographical location of the Arctic region. People or other social elements are not clearly connected to the conception of "arctic", and elements of summer were not connected to "arctic" at all. The tourist definitions of "arctic" maintain great similarities with the ways the Arctic region is defined in varying fields of science, as well as with the images and representations produced of "arctic" through marketing and media. The results of this study provide valuable information of the scarcely studied social ways of understanding and defining "arctic", and the results of the study can be applied in further research of the topic, as well as in adjustments of tourism marketing applying the term.

Keywords: *arctic, arcticity, tourism research, arctic tourism, phenomenology*

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Tiivistelmä:

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on luoda uutta ymmärrystä termin ”arktisuus” käytöstä selvittämällä millaisia määrityksiä ulkomaiset matkailijat antavat termille “arktinen”, kuinka he ymmärtävät sen ja kuvailevat sitä, sekä millaisia mielikuvia termi heissä herättää. Tämän työn tutkimuskysymys on: Kuinka matkailijat määrittelevät termin ”arktinen” arkikielessä ja millaisia merkityksiä he antavat sille? Tarkastelen tutkimuksessa myös sitä, kuinka nämä määritelmät poikkeavat termille annetuista, usean eri tieteenalan olemassa olevista määritelmistä ja kuinka arktisuuden esittäminen ja markkinointi poikkeavat matkailijoiden omista määritelmistä.

Rovaniemellä kerätty haastatteluaineisto koostuu kymmenestä puoli-strukturoidusta haastattelusta. Tutkimuksen aineistoa tarkastellaan ja analysoidaan fenomenologian näkökulmasta, pyrkimyksenä selvittää miten Lapissa vierailevat matkailijat ymmärtävät arktisuuden. Tutkimus linkittyy psykologiaan, kun tarkastelun kohteena ovat yksilöiden kokemukset. Merkityksenannon ja paikan kokemisen teoreettisia keskusteluja hyödynnetään tutkimuksessa teorian ja empirian yhdistävinä tekijöinä. Tutkimuksessa termiä arktisuus (*arcticity*) käytetään kuvailevana sanana arktiseksi koetuille asioille.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että matkailijat ymmärtävät arktisuuden ensisijaisesti suhteessa talviolosuhteisiin ja kylmyyteen, arktisiin eläimiin ja luontoon, sekä Arktiksen maantieteelliseen sijaintiin. Ihmiset tai sosiaaliset elementit eivät ole selkeästi yhdistettävissä arktisuuteen. Matkailijoiden määritelmät arktisuudesta sisältävät yhtäläisyyksiä sekä Arktiksen tieteellisten määrittelyjen, että arktisten kohteiden markkinoinnin tuottamien mielikuvien kanssa. Tutkimuksen tulokset tarjoavat lisätietoa hyvin vähän tutkitusta tavasta ymmärtää ja määritellä arktisuus sosiaalisesta näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksen tuloksia voidaan hyödyntää aiheen jatkotutkimuksissa sekä termiä hyödyntävän matkailumarkkinoinnin kehittämisessä.

Avainsanat: *arktinen, arktisuus, matkailututkimus, arktinen matkailu, fenomenologia*

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1. INTRODUCTION

All of a sudden, everything was arctic.
(Heikkilä, 2013)

The Arctic regions of the world have never attracted as much attention as they do today. The Arctic is a frequent topic on the news and a concern of the environmental activists of Greenpeace, it is affecting political decision making and international relations, and countries near and far the Arctic region are competing to have their say in the Arctic decision making. The term "arctic" has become trendy, used in discourse to promote one's knowledge, interest, and even the right to participate in the Arctic discussion. The Arctic area, then, has become 'sexy'; an exotic region with great economic potential (Østhagen, 2012). This research was created to investigate the abundant usage of the term "arctic", various definitions given to the Arctic region and the phenomenon of arctic tourism, as well as the perceptions international tourists' hold of the term and concept "arctic".

1.1 Background to the study

According to the geopolitics expert Charles Emmerson, in the twenty-first century "the Arctic has become a lens through which to view the world" – its role in the global issues concerning globalization, climate change, energy security, economic development and environmental protection is both inevitable and unavoidable (Emmerson, 2010, p. 6). The international interest to the northern hemisphere of the world can be explained by a number of factors. The Arctic regions are very sensitive to environmental change and threatened by global warming. The still quite unexploited mineral, gas and oil resources of the Arctic that interest the energy suppliers, and the opening of the Northeast Passage as a seaway transport route, have raised much attention throughout the world and also increased the political discussion of the Arctic region ever since the 1990s (Saarnisto, 1997; see also AHDR, 2004; United Nations

Environment Programme). Tveitdal (2003) adds that the vision of the Arctic is a contradictory one: while on the other hand it is seen as "the last frontier of limitless, rich environment that can be exploited for commercial use, it is also seen as an unspoiled area of pristine beauty, which should be preserved in all its glory".

In the context of Finland and Finnish Lapland, Koivurova (2013) raises an important question whether it is necessary to call the northern areas of the world "arctic" – and do the people living in these areas even wish them to be labeled "arctic": perhaps it is the market value of the term itself that has resulted in such abundant use of the word "arctic". In our contemporary world the term "arctic" is repeatedly used in various different social and cultural contexts, although it is still very vague what the term comprehensively represents. It is also becoming increasingly popular as a marketing term, especially in the field of tourism. Thus it is essential for tourism stakeholders to know how the term "arctic" is understood by the tourists, customers or guests. The aim of this study is to define "arctic" from a social sciences context, create a new definition for "arctic" and introduce a fresh perspective on the otherwise very scientific (natural science) field of various already existing definitions. This type of new definition allows "arctic" to be understood from a social perspective of tourists, and thus also to be defined in broader extent than before.

In this research, I use the theory of phenomenology to investigate the way in which international tourists visiting Rovaniemi, Finnish Lapland, experience and form their perceptions of the term "arctic". Utilizing a phenomenological approach, my goal is to find out how "arctic" is defined and understood using the interviewees' perceptions as my source of information. As the goal of this study is to produce information about the individual tourists' understandings of the abstract concept of "arctic", is the study related to psychological field of research. In the study a social approach is emphasized, meaning, that the research aims to produce socially connected and relevant information about people's ways of understanding "arctic", instead of focusing on the strictly natural scientific ways of defining the Arctic region and the concept.

In this research I will take into consideration some of the social and cultural aspects that affect the situation the individual interviewees are in: there are *social factors* such as being a tourist; part of a minority amongst the main population of locals forming the majority, as well as *cultural factors* such as their country and culture of origin, that normally and naturally affect their worldview also outside the culture's context. The analytical approach of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), originating from psychological research, is applied in the analysis of this research (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The theories of *meaning generation* and *sense of place* are discussed in order to connect the theoretical side of the study, study of phenomenology, to the empirical side, interviewing tourists. The definitions provided by the interviewees can give valuable information about the individuals' and in this particular case, tourists' perceptions of the term, phenomenon and region we call "arctic".

The Arctic region or arctic tourism have not been studied from a social sciences point of view to a very broad extent. The research done has mostly been in the field of natural sciences, and the existing definitions of the Arctic are mainly of political, geographical and biological purpose. The social and cultural research of the Arctic is often anthropological, focusing on the study of inhabitation in the Arctic areas, minorities, such as indigenous people of the Arctic, and their forms of livelihood, such as reindeer husbandry. With this study I seek to investigate a contemporary definition of the Arctic, which may produce understandings of both the region as well as the concept of "arctic", as it appears to tourists: people who have perhaps chosen Finnish Lapland as their holiday destination based on their perception of the region as something "arctic".

1.2 Defining Arctic

Arctic tourism could be defined as tourism occurring in the Arctic regions of the world. However, to say so, one must be able to define and delineate the Arctic – which is not an easy thing to do. The Arctic region is difficult to define, for no single, unambiguous definition exists. The boundaries of the Arctic vary depending on the context, whether

the area is delineated according to political agreements or academic disciplines (Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region, 2013). When looking at the already existing definitions of the Arctic, especially from the field of tourism, differences can be found depending on the viewpoint. According to Jacobsen (1994) who has studied tourism in the European circumpolar regions, the Arctic region is usually imagined to be "a vast and far-away place". Hall and Saarinen (2010a) agree to this definition, and continue by stating that commonly people see the Polar Regions as cold and remote wilderness areas with only few (if any) people living there. In their publication *Polar tourism – Tourism in the Arctic and Antarctic regions* Hall and Johnston (1995) have defined polar tourism to be all "travel for pleasure or adventure within polar regions, exclusive of travel for primarily governmental, commercial, subsistence, military or scientific purposes".

In the project Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism (SMART) carried out by the Northern Forum and the Arctic Council, characteristics of Arctic tourism were identified, in order to distinguish the Arctic regions from southern areas and identify the special features that need to be taken into consideration, when operating in the Arctic region (Vaarala, 2006). The characteristics were divided in four main sectors, which are 1) Environment and Climate, 2) Infrastructure, 3) Socio-Economics and 4) Culture. Each sector included the identified characteristics, their impacts and specific training needs for businesses operating in the Arctic. In relation to this study, examples from the socio-economic and cultural sectors should be mentioned. From the field of socio-economics, recognized characteristics of Arctic tourism are:

- Most Arctic areas are remote areas of developed countries
- Populations are sparse in comparison to southern areas
- Educational levels on average lower than in the urban areas
- Limited access to training and educational facilities
- High cost of living and doing business

Examples of the common cultural characteristics identified in relation to Arctic tourism are:

- Usually differ significantly from the urban areas
- Local languages and dialects are different from the mainstream language
- May have different world view
- Closer relationship with the land

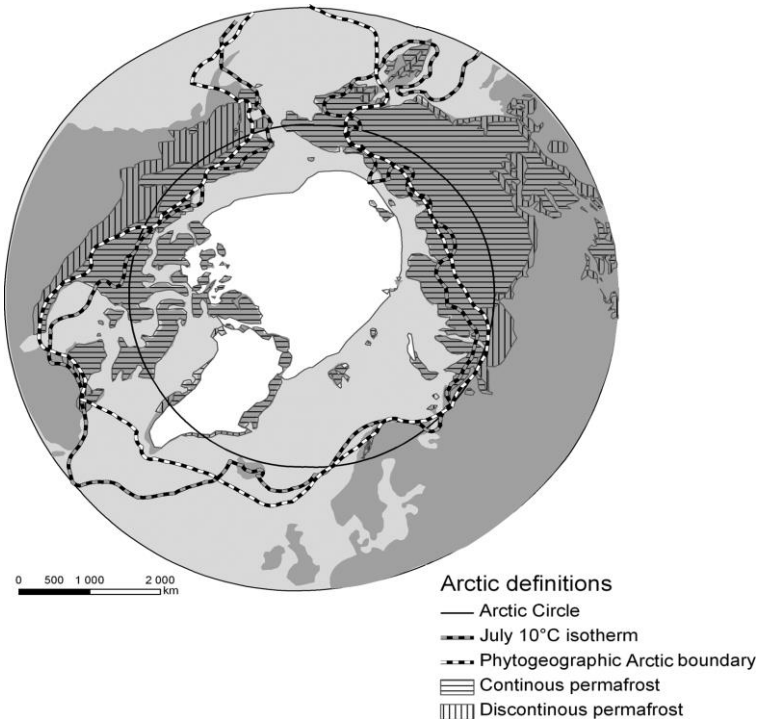
(Vaarala, 2006, p. 37.)

Models, such as the one presented here, have been created for the purpose of regional development throughout the Arctic. It is based on pure supposition, whether the studies have actually implemented sustainable and actively used methods of practice to the use of regional stakeholders and tourism operators. They have, however, provided a significant input of new research information about the Arctic, characterizing and categorizing the different elements one should acknowledge when operating in the Arctic region.

It is essential to notify, that the idea of the polar or arctic regions as empty wilderness areas has usually been defined by those outside of it, people who may have never even visited it (Hall & Saarinen, 2010a). This is problematic especially in the case of the north, where permanent inhabitance can in fact be found throughout the Arctic region. It is also something I have to take into consideration when analyzing the results of my study, as it is tourists, people usually visiting from outside the Arctic region that I am interviewing. It is relevant to pay attention to the social dimensions of the Arctic, as the region is attracting more and more international interest and increasing numbers of visitors. The images or definitions that people give to "arctic" are always affected by a number of factors such as marketing, word of mouth, media and so on. However, the understanding people hold of the term is still very real and genuine to them, although in most cases it is indeed influenced by external factors. From the tourism stakeholders' point of view, this information on how the visitors experience "arctic" is essential, if improvements or adjustments to regional tourism strategy and marketing are to be

made. This study is not, however, intended to be a guidebook for improved target marketing of tourism sector, but rather an attempt to stress the often contradictory relation between the marketing messages and the reality. With this research I want to emphasize the need to focus more attention to the social and cultural matters of the Arctic, and give my contribution to field of study.

In terms of physical geography, the Arctic region consists of the sea and land area around the North Pole (Saarnisto, 1997). The most common scientific delineations that also other fields of science often refer to, are based on indicators such as the tree line, climate (the July +10° isotherm), permafrost or latitude, such as north of the Arctic Circle at 66°33′N or 60°N (picture 1). The Arctic concept can, however, be extended even further geographically, in example by taking into consideration the watersheds of the rivers which drain into the Arctic Ocean. (Hall & Saarinen, 2010b.) When the Arctic region is defined as above, Finland hardly counts as an Arctic country at all (Saarnisto, 1997).



Picture 1. Definitions of the Arctic (Hall & Saarinen, 2010b, p. 6).

There are other delineations to be found, too. The polar regions of the world are commonly divided in four: Arctic, sub-Arctic, Antarctic and sub-Antarctic. When the Antarctic region is fairly easy to delineate by defining it to be everything south of 60°S (land and sea), the northern Arctic counterpart is much more difficult to delineate geographically. While there are differing political and biophysical boundaries of Arctic to take into account, clear consensus of the delineation of the Arctic region is hard to find. (Maher, Stewart & Lück, 2011, p. 5.) However, when the concept of sub-Arctic areas is utilized, could also Finland be counted in as an Arctic country.

Another definition to the northern Arctic area, especially significant in the case of whether Finland counts as an Arctic country or not, is the Barents Euro-Arctic region (picture 2). The region covers the northern provinces of Norway, Sweden and Finland and parts of northwest Russia and is the largest region for transnational cooperation in Europe (Saarnisto, 1997; Soppela, Brown-Leonardi, Fryer & Kankaanpää, 2010). The Barents Euro-Arctic region is a result of the European Union's Northern Dimension policy, actively promoted by Finland ever since joining the EU in 1995. The region was originally established for international cooperation after the fall of the Soviet Union, and regarded as an important element of cooperation between the Nordic countries, Russia and the EU (Soppela et al., 2010).

Picture 2. Map of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (Fryer, Brown-Leonardi & Soppela, 2010, p. 8).

If a political approach was utilized, the Arctic Council as a strong political stakeholder is relevant to mention. The member states of the Arctic Council include Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the United States of America. In the Arctic Council's *Arctic Human Development Report* (AHDR, 2004) the Arctic region also covers a number of areas below 60°N in Canada (southern Nunavik), the USA (parts of Alaska including the Aleutian Islands) and Russia (parts of Kamchatka, Magadan and Sakha (Yakutia) Republic), which is another indicator of the fact that the delineation of the region is not unambiguous. (Hall & Saarinen, 2010a.) In Finland, the increased international interest towards the Arctic resulted in the update process of the Arctic strategy of Finland in 2013. The updated strategy (Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region, 2013) emphasizes that Finland, as a whole, *is* an arctic country with versatile expertise on arctic matters and a strong interest to be involved in the development of the Arctic region. The Finnish

government included four pillars of policy, which together define Finland's role in the Arctic region. These values are *an Arctic country, Arctic expertise, Sustainable development and environmental considerations* and *International cooperation.* Finland's right to be considered as an Arctic country is justified by a number of factors, such as the country's long history as acknowledged Arctic community and the "extensive and in-depth Arctic expertise" found on various fields of science. (Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region, 2013.) This political outlining again proves that the various delineations of the Arctic do conflict with each other, as the context changes.

Fors (2010) adds yet another dimension to the process of defining the Arctic region, by arguing that so called *identity regions* should also be taken into consideration when defining the Arctic. These identity regions have both physical and social borders, as they define local identity, people's sense of belonging. These borders evoke loyalty and emotion, and much like the nation state regions; also the identity region is an imagined mental image of a larger unity, a community. Identity region is often taken for granted by the people living within it, again much like nation states are. The region is often considered to be a natural and eternal unit, although just like any other territories, they are too social products. The identity region is shaped through spatial and symbolic bordering processes, in which ´Here` is established in opposition to ´There`. (Fors, 2010.)

All regions cannot be identity regions. An identity region can be developed only within a population that shares something common and unique that also distinguishes them from other regional groups. It cannot be developed in complete isolation, for it depends in a larger socio-spatial context, but its development might also be challenged by other regional groups. Although there are several factors that distinguish the Barents Region from other areas, research has shown that the Barents Region cannot be considered as one unite identity region. (Fors, 2010.) The social dimension and the concept of social borders are, however, important to keep in mind when defining the Arctic. Unlike Antarctica, the Arctic region has permanent human population of approximately four

million people (AHDR, 2004; Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region, 2013), whereas the whole circumpolar North has about 13,1 million permanent residents (UArctic Atlas, 2009). This proves the need for social research of the Arctic as well.

This sub-chapter has showed that the definition of Arctic is everything but easy, since various definitions exist. It is perhaps the context of one's interest that eventually helps to find a definition most suitable for the purpose. In this research, the delineations used in the field of tourism are the ones most relevant to the topic, although the other existing definitions, especially from the field of natural sciences, were also necessary to discuss. In the field of arctic or polar tourism the numerous definitions of the Arctic have been mostly repeated by various authors of the arctic tourism literature, and only little if any criticism has been addressed to the repetitive and monotonous tone of definition. Viken (2013) points out an important notion of the Anglo-American hegemony within academic writing about arctic tourism. In his criticism he argues that the trend of (Anglo-American) people who live outside the Arctic characterizing and defining the Arctic area, only to be repeated by an author approaching the subject from a similar setting, can at worst result in falsified definitions to the Arctic. These definitions are created by repetitive citing of certain well-published authors, without sufficient empirical experience of the region or critical approach to the previous studies. However, in the recent years the situation has changed, as more researchers and authors from the Arctic region have been accepted to publish their research. (Viken, 2013.) In this research I will present contemporary tourism research focused on arctic matters, acknowledging the valuable input the previous studies and the work of their authors have given to the field of arctic tourism research. Instead of simply repeating the previous definitions given to the concept of “arctic”, in this research I will develop a new definition describing “arctic” from a social science point of view, placing emphasis on the individual person’s perception of the concept instead of defining the concept much like the region, from a natural science perspective.

1.3 Previous studies

The Arctic research in Finland can be divided to four main research sectors: 1) The natural resources of the Arctic (geology, forestry, agriculture, reindeer husbandry), 2) Environmental research (oceanology, meteorology, biology, monitoring the Arctic environment), 3) Arctic technology (technology and industry, Arctic naval and marine engineering, cold climate research and construction) and 4) Man in Arctic and northern areas (people in the Arctic and humanities, arctic medicine and health, regional development and social science, politics and the international relations) (Saarnisto, 1997). In this division, the study of arctic tourism would be included in the sector of *Man in the Arctic and northern areas*.

Arctic tourism has been widely studied under the name *polar tourism*, meaning tourism in the both Polar Regions (the Arctic and Antarctica) of the world. Topics such as the impacts of polar tourism on the fragile ecosystems of the polar areas, the trends and motives of travel to the extreme, the economic impacts of polar tourism, as well as the future of polar tourism are few of the main research interests in the field of polar tourism. A significant amount of tourism related research of the Arctic area has been done in Canada, the leading country of Arctic research, whilst also Antarctica as the southern polar region has attracted much attention in the field of polar tourism research.

In northern Europe and the Nordic countries arctic tourism research is often linked to nature-based tourism and winter tourism, although specific research on the variant forms of nordic tourism has been made as well. In Finland, the growing importance of "arctic matters" has started to attract more public attention only recently, although arctic research has been made in various institutions for decades already. In the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi, as well as in Universities of Lapland, Oulu and Helsinki, arctic research on matters from biological or geological ground to political and anthropological studies has been made. Despite this, and the fact that tourism in Finland is growing in importance along with the arctic issues, majority of the research on arctic tourism is still

mostly conducted abroad. This could be the case because the concept and term "arctic" have only recently become so popular they are today, and previously the tourism research has focused on the investigation of northern tourism issues under the labels of nature-based tourism, winter tourism and northern tourism.

Researchers such as Alain A. Grenier, Colin Michael Hall, Jarkko Saarinen, John Snyder, Dieter K. Müller, Margaret Johnston and Bernard Stonehouse have all had a significant contribution to the current state of polar tourism research. Alain Grenier (1998; 2004; 2007; 2011), an exceptionally dedicated researcher in the field of polar tourism, has studied ship-based polar tourism (i.e. in the Northeast passage) as well as arctic tourism in relation to nature-based tourism and regional development. It was Grenier (2004; 2007; 2011) who first acknowledged the need for further research of the conceptualization of polar tourism, as well as the lack of previous attempts to define "arctic" and provide a single definition that could better help understand the various existing terms describing polar tourism. The work of Grenier will be presented extensively in this research, due to the mutual interest in the social aspects of contemporary polar tourism research and the definitions of polar and arctic tourism. A publication by title *Polar Tourism – A Tool for Regional Development*, edited by Grenier and Müller (2011), was compiled based on the first conference of the fairly new International Polar Tourism Research Network (IPTRN). The goal of this network is to create and share knowledge, resources and perspectives on polar tourism through international cooperation between the members (Müller, Lundmark & Lemelin, 2013). Hall (1995; 2010a; 2010b) is a productive contributor to the contemporary tourism research, who has done research especially in the field of sustainable tourism, but also focused on aspects of polar tourism. In his research cooperation with Saarinen they focused on the study of change in Polar Regions and the future of polar tourism (see Hall & Saarinen 2010a; 2010b). Hall and Johnston (1995) again, were the editors of one of the first highly influential books on polar tourism, *Polar Tourism: Tourism in the Arctic and Antarctic Region,* which gave rise to an increased amount of diverse publications in the field of polar tourism. It was also this publication by Hall and

Johnston (1995) that first presented the label of polar tourism to describe the tourism activities taking place in both polar areas of the world.

In this trend of polar research, Snyder and Stonehouse (2007; 2010) have studied the prospects and environmental perspectives of polar tourism, and Patrick T. Maher, Emma J. Stewart and Michael Lück (2010; 2011) have done research on cruise tourism in the Polar Regions. In Scandinavian context, Arvid Viken (2011) and Jens Kristian Jacobsen (1994) are few authors of relevant arctic research from the Scandinavian Arctic. Concerning the context of the Barents region, recent publication of the project Public-Private Partnership in Barents Tourism (BART) discusses tourism development and challenges of cross-border cooperation in the Barents region from the entrepreneurial and regional development viewpoints (see García-Rosell, Hakkarainen, Koskinen, Paloniemi, Syrjälä, Tekoniemi-Selkälä & Vähäkuopus, 2013). The significant journals of contemporary arctic and polar tourism research include the *Polar Journal* (Routledge), *Polar Geography* (Taylor & Francis) and *Polar Record* (Scott Polar Research Institute) as well as the North American journal *Arctic* (The Arctic Institute of North America).

Arctic and polar tourism have also been studied in the context of tourism in the peripheral areas of the world and extreme tourism. In addition to these, many studies of the impacts of climate change and global warming have been done in relation to the polar regions of the world, due to their fragile state. This has even coincided in the phenomenon of so called "last chance tourism" concentrated on the endangered or vanishing destinations on the world (see Lemelin, Dawson, Stewart, Maher & Lück, 2010; Lemelin, Dawson & Stewart, 2012). As the interest in arctic matters has increased during the last decade, has undoubtedly also the interest in the study of arctic tourism and its impacts grown. The research and authors I have referred to in this study provide a look into the state of contemporary arctic research, meaning that not all the existing arctic research has by any means been presented in the context of this study. Very little attention has been previously paid to the social, cultural or colloquial definitions of the

term “arctic”, as the focus has mainly been on the scientific definitions. This evident lack of knowledge on the non-scientific definitions and understandings people hold of the term and the concept of “arctic” is a problem that this research aims to provide a partial answer to, by producing information about the ways in which tourists understand and define “arctic”.

Research focused on northern terminology and cultural aspects of the northern regions can be found especially in Canada. It was Louis-Edmond Hamelin (1979) who first introduced the term *nordicity* as a descriptive word for Canadians to use when identifying themselves with their geographical and cultural surroundings. Another, more recent study of nordicity comes from Sherrill E. Grace (2001) who in her publication *Canada and the Idea of North* provides a thorough examination of northern images, narrations and understandings that define the culture, people and most importantly the area: Canada. Further, the scholars Daniel Chartier (2007; 2011) and Graeme Wynn (2009) have both done contemporary research on the Canadian nordicity. It is these definitions of *nordicity* that I will use as inspiration as well as source of comparison in my analysis, when introducing the term *arcticity* as a degree of experiencing the “arctic”.

As attention to the social, other than strictly natural scientific way of examining and defining “arctic” is called for in this research, few words should be said about the current social and cultural research done in relation to the Arctic. Anthropological research interests of the Arctic have been conducted already for a long time in all Arctic countries. Also, research interests such as the human development, different societies and cultures (including indigenous communities), the economics and politics as well as human well-being in the Arctic have been studied (see AHDR, 2004). In addition to these, more recent crosscutting themes such as gender issues and education in the Arctic are also becoming popular research topics amongst the scholars and researcher interested in Arctic issues. The sociocultural impacts of tourism have gained attention in a broader extent, in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The

programme includes brief presentation of tourism as a contributor to sociocultural conservation and the general positive and negative sociocultural impacts of tourism (see United Nations Environment Programme.) In relation to the various indigenous communities of the Arctic region, these impacts defined by the United Nations and the general attention given to the topic are of high value.

Since this study focuses on the examination of individual tourists understandings of the concept of "arctic, the study approach can be said to be fairly close to a psychological one. Studying individual experiences and understandings in a tourism research study is explained by the aim to produce qualitative information about the ways in which individual tourists' experience, perceive, understand and define the concept of "arctic". In the field of psychology, the study of tourism has had some major topics of interest, usually concerning destination selection, tourist satisfaction and consumer psychology of tourism. Although the study of tourist behavior and experience might have had a slow start in the field of psychology, its reach and significance is without a doubt becoming more important (Pearce, 2011). The psychological aspects of this research and their connection to the theories of phenomenology and hermeneutics will be further explained later on in this paper.

1.4 Purpose and goals of the study

This study is an attempt to investigate a new definition for the contemporary northern world we call "arctic" and live in. With this study I want to find out how tourists understand the term "arctic" and what types of elements and meanings do they combine to the term. The research question of this study is:

How is the term "arctic" colloquially defined by tourists?

In my analysis I will also pay attention to the sub-questions of "What types of meanings do these tourists give to the concept "arctic", "How do these definitions differ from the

definitions given to the Arctic in varying fields of research?" and "How does the representation and marketing of "arctic" differ from tourists' own perceptions and definitions?" With this study I also intend to create a contemporary definition for the quality of something being "arctic", *arcticity*, linking the term more closely to social and cultural context instead of the purely scientific (natural science) ones.

It is important to keep in mind that the interviewees in this study are international tourists, usually visiting the destination only for a short period of time, coming from all around the world. This fact without a doubt has an effect on the answers. The definitions given to the term "arctic" are influenced by the individual's cultural background, its traditions and ways of viewing and understanding the world. A general definition of the cultural dimension of "arctic" cannot be created, not at least assuming that the definition would be universally accepted everywhere in the world. This means, that each culture might have a slightly different definition to what they understand to be "arctic". Also, a specific social situation is present in the research setting of interviewing tourists (Hakkarainen, 2010). I claim that when on holiday, people often want to detach themselves from the possible stress, worries and negative things in their lives and simply be in a good mood. On holiday, people are perhaps even to some degree more careless than in their everyday life situations. According to Urry (2002), tourism is a type of leisure. MacCannell (1999) connects the leisure of tourism to cultural experiences of vacations and amusements, making a clear distinction between the time of leisure and the everyday life of work. Grenier (1998) characterizes tourism to be "a way to escape the usual routine, to get away from it all!". Indeed, usually a holiday is regarded as a time of joy, relaxation and separation from everyday life. In the analysis of the empirical data of this research, I will pay attention to this contextual factor of being a tourist.

It is also a fact, that in our contemporary, modern world there are very few if any people left whose life and thinking are not at least in some way affected by external stimuli such as media and marketing. My presumption is that tourists who travel to Rovaniemi

and Finnish Lapland base their definitions of "arctic" on their personal perceptions. These perceptions can, however, be influenced by the images provided by tourism marketing, movies, media as well as scientific sources. The perceptions can hold expectations and prejudgment within them and change during the time spent in the destination. Still, they are a genuine portrayal of how a person understands the term and concept of "arctic", regardless of and yet influenced by, external factors, such as the surrounding society and different mediums. This way, it might also be that the definitions people give to the term "arctic" are no different from the scientific definitions or the images created by tourism industry and marketing.

To me, "arctic" refers to something remote and rare: a place hard to reach and harsh to live in, with animal species and human populations that have learned to survive in these conditions with time. This being my personal perception, Rovaniemi does not resemble the image I hold of a geographical place called "arctic" and to me the usage of the word within various contexts around the Rovaniemi region is quite baffling. This does not, however, mean that I would automatically define *arcticity* to resemble the image I hold, for no one "genuine" yet universal definition exists. Further, I believe "arcticity" can be understood as a more complex dimension too, such as an imaginary state of mind, or a way of living and defining oneself within a certain cultural, geographical and social context. This way, it is impossible to determine borders to the phenomenon of experiencing something "arctic". I present my perceptions here in order to allow the reader to understand the presetting from which this research is being done. I recognize that there might be great differences between the perceptions of a tourist and a local, depending on the individuals' personal background. However, I also believe that there is no single and *right* definition for the term "arctic", but that each person holds a personal understanding of the term, area and phenomenon – a notion supported by the social constructivist theory (see Berger & Luckmann, 2011). Thus, with the attempt to define the term, I am not expecting to create a one universal suitable-for-all-purposes-and-contexts definition, but simply give my contribution to the definition of this term so actively used.

Arctic landscapes are experienced differently by different people. The relation to a place is always different for those people who live there, as opposed to those who just visit the place or experience it through media. *Northernness* has been identified as a common characteristic of northern countries as it has played an important role in numerous national identities. (Hall & Saarinen, 2010b, p. 10.) As mentioned earlier in the Previous Studies sub-chapter 1.3, Canadian researchers Hamelin (1979) and Grace (2001) have both studied the concept of *nordicity* in relation to the national and regional identity formation in Canada. In this research, I will present my similar definition for the Arctic context, *arcticity*, and investigate the need for a dimension of 'collective imaginary' (Grenier, 2007) of the Arctic. I will also evaluate critically the goal of creating such definition, in relation to the vast size of the Arctic region and the multiple different cultures inhabiting it.

Arctic scientific terminology has developed through years of conducted research in the fields of natural sciences. Within the field of social sciences, the research tradition of the Arctic is still fairly young. As mentioned earlier in sub-chapter 1.3, the concept of "polar tourism" was first applied by Hall and Johnston in 1995. Arctic or polar tourism provides its own definitions to the field of arctic terminology and understanding of the word, and tourists who travel to destinations considered "arctic" possibly reproduce the images that have influenced their views, with their own words. Social and cultural definitions of "arctic" may exist within the indigenous cultures living in the vast areas throughout the Arctic, but an "outsider's" viewpoint on what a tourist or a visitor to the region perceives to be "arctic" has not been studied yet. One might say, that the researchers who have studied and visited the Polar Regions of the world hold such "outsider's perceptions" of "arctic". However, I have decided to leave out of examination these travel descriptions and definitions of tourism professionals, and focus on the more contemporary perceptions of tourists.

With this study I wish to participate in the increased international discussion of the Arctic region and provide a new perspective of defining the Arctic socially, focusing on individuals' understandings, and in relation to tourism sector. I will this way try to provide my contribution to Grenier's (see Grenier, 2007, p. 57; 2011, p. 72) call for a comprehensive definition of the concept and phenomenon of arctic (polar) tourism, and the terminology of descriptions of the Arctic. This study will also aim to point out the need for further investigation of the social viewpoint of arctic tourism research.

1.5 Methodology and data

In this research I chose to use interviewing as a research method, since the purpose of the study is to produce information about tourists' definitions of "arctic". I found interviewing to be the most suitable way of reaching this information, because it enables the interviewee's inner thoughts and attitudes to be shared through interaction (Hugh-Jones, 2010). Although interviewing is nowadays a very popular, and no longer "alternative" method of qualitative research, was it chosen to this study specifically for a few reasons. Using interviews as a research method allowed me as a researcher to bring together the tourists' personal insights and perceptions of the arctic: in other words, to find information relevant to the study. Interviewing also allowed me to link the empirical part of the study to the theoretical framework of phenomenology. Lastly, as the goal of the study is to receive qualitative information of the chosen topic, were some clearly quantitative research methods easy to rule out.

In this study I chose to interview tourists to be able to link the study of the term "arctic" to the field of tourism. In a city like Rovaniemi, located on the Arctic Circle in Finnish Lapland, tourism is a significant contributor to the local economy. The city of Rovaniemi is one of the leading winter tourism destinations in Scandinavia with over 500 000 annual visitors, largely due to the variety of outdoor activities provided to tourists and its status as the hometown of Santa Claus (Visit Rovaniemi, 2013). Thus, interviewing tourists was also fairly easy due to the large amount of annually visiting

travelers. The interviews provided information about how tourists perceive “arctic” in the particular context of Rovaniemi, but also in the wider context of the Arctic region. According to Hugh-Jones (2010) we all have a personalized, private and often complex inner life of thoughts and feelings that shape, and are shaped by, everyday experiences. We also have a social self, a side that comes alive when interacting with others, primarily through talking. When interacting with others, we both express something of ourselves and learn about others. This talking and listening is a key to understanding our everyday experiences. The practice of understanding other people through interaction is most commonly seen in the form of a research interview. (Hugh-Jones, 2010.)

This research incorporated a total of ten (10) semi-structured interviews inquiring about the various perceptions of “arctic” amongst visitors to Rovaniemi. Half (5) of the interviews were conducted in winter 2012-2013 and the remaining five in summer 2013. Of originally six interviews conducted in winter, one was left out of further analysis due to the complications and misunderstandings caused by a language barrier. Of the total amount of ten respondents, six were women and remaining four were men, with three female and two male respondents both in winter and summer. The age span of the female respondents was 26-36 years, and the one of male respondents 26-37 years. The fairly young age of all the respondents can be explained by the general age groups of visitors to the destination on the specific dates of conducting fieldwork, as well as the choice of interview language: as all the interviews were conducted in English, a language barrier or hesitance of speaking English diminished the amount of older respondents dramatically.

No other 'qualifications' else than the respondent's ability or willingness to participate in the research interview in English were used. A large number of tourists of all ages and nationalities were approached in the field with the initial question of “Excuse me, do you speak English?” and very few of them responded affirmatively. It may also be the simple fact of being on holiday, perhaps having a tight schedule or not wanting to be bothered, that affected the formation of the rather homogenous group of respondents.

The respondents came from four different continents, North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, from the countries of the U.S.A., Spain, Lithuania, South Korea and Australia. Again, the dominance of the Anglophone respondents (a total of five respondents came from an English speaking country) can be explained by the language choice of the study and tourists' willingness to speak English.

The amount of empirical samples may seem small, but is sufficient in qualitative research and further explained by the choice of the analytical approach, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), analytical method commonly applied in detailed investigation of studies with smaller data samples. The approach is committed to thorough examination of small samples of empirical data, for good quality interpretations of very large samples are extremely time consuming to make, due to the detailed process of analyzing the data (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The ten research interviews were conducted both in winter and summer to be able to compare whether the change of seasons has an effect on the interviewees descriptions. The interviews took place in Rovaniemi, specifically the Santa Claus Village on the Arctic Circle. The choice of location is explained by the relevant role of the tourist attraction both to tourists and the Rovaniemi tourism sector. I acknowledge that the choice of location might, as well, have an effect on the answers and will keep this in mind while analyzing the transcribed interview data.

The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder with the consent of the interviewees. The duration of the interviews varied from 2-3 minutes to 5-10 minutes, based on the respondents' thoughts of the topic and length of answering. When approaching people with no prior notification of the research given to them in a holiday destination, and asking them to participate in a research interview, lengthy conversations or analytical examinations should not be expected. I acknowledged this when deciding the form of collecting empirical data and chose to conduct shorter interviews on a larger number of respondents. After the fieldwork was done, the empirical data was transcribed, organized and then analyzed. The interview transcripts formed in total eight pages of

transcribed data. The choice of using interpretative phenomenological analysis as an analytical method of this study is explained by the wish to apply a phenomenological approach to the process of understanding how people comprehend "arctic" in the world surrounding them.

The choice of using phenomenology as a theoretical framework of this study is explained by the desire to investigate tourists' personal experiences and understandings of "arctic". Phenomenology as study of individuals' experiences supported the research goals and provided the study with a solid theoretical background. The phenomenological framework also supported the choice of the analytical approach of IPA, as these two along with the use of semi-structured interviews as data collection method complement each other.

During the research process and especially the phase of conducting fieldwork, I paid attention to the positioning of myself studying the "Others". I became aware of my role as a researcher: a local, student and a young Finnish woman inquiring about the perceptions, understanding and experiences of these "Others": randomly selected group of tourists, travelers and visitors, men and women of different ages and cultural backgrounds, coming from different parts of the world. I acknowledged this positioning and its possible influences also when interpreting the research data.

1.6 Structure of the study

The *second chapter* of this study provides an introduction to the field of arctic tourism, by presenting its history, the trends that have influenced tourism and travel in the Arctic region, and the identified groups of arctic tourists and their motives of travel to the Arctic. The chapter will provide a comprehensive look to the current state of international arctic tourism research and present few of its central authors. The latter part of the chapter focuses on the representation of the Arctic – how is the area pictured and described in tourism marketing, are the various representations of the Arctic

accurate and how does the representation of the Arctic effect the perceptions and understandings tourists have of the area.

The *third chapter* revolves around the method of interviewing, used for producing research data in this study. In the chapter, interviewing as a research method will be presented in detail, with a special focus on semi-structured interviews that were used in the context of this study. I will also examine the ethical aspects of conducting interview research and the positioning of the researcher. The *fourth chapter* is dedicated to the examination of phenomenology and hermeneutics, the theoretical framework used in this study, and the theory of interpretation. The chapter provides a comprehensive introduction to the philosophical school of thought, phenomenology, its history and applications. The core ideas of phenomenology will be presented in a clear and detailed manner, after which the theory and its applications are examined in relation to this research. The analytical method of this research, interpretative phenomenological analysis, is also presented in this chapter, explaining its close relation to the theories of both phenomenology and hermeneutics. Last, I will briefly present an introduction to the theory of interpretation, hermeneutics, and its relation to both the theoretical framework and the analytical method of this study.

The *fifth chapter* of this study presents the analysis of the empirical research data, the interview transcripts. The chapter clearly illustrates the practical application and different stages of IPA analysis, and contains plentiful examples of how the analytical process of interpreting the data was done in this research. The chapter leads the reader to follow the different stages of IPA research in the same chronological order, in which they were applied in the actual analysis. Examples, interview extracts and various tables enable the reader to visualize both the data and the different features of the analysis. Need for essential adjustments of the analytical method and the interpretative levels are explained and justified in the chapter, and the new interpretative levels created for this specific study are presented. The results of the interpretative analysis are presented to the reader in close connection to the original interview transcript, in order to illustrate

how these final results of the research were achieved. In the latter part of the chapter I will present my definition created to describe regional identity and elements considered "arctic", *arcticity,* and the relation of this descriptive term to the similar work done in Canada with the term nordicity.

Finally, the *sixth chapter* of this research contains the conclusions. In the concluding chapter of this research, I will draw together for assessment the complete structure of this study, present the learning outcomes of it and explain how the results of this study could be applied to practice. I will also asses the need for further studies in the fields of arctic tourism, arctic terminology, and the social science studies of the Arctic.

2. EXPLORING ARCTIC TOURISM

Polar tourism is the regional manifestation of a global phenomenon,
and what is exceptional is where it occurs rather than the activity itself.
(Roura, 2013, p. 238)

In this chapter, I investigate the definitions, history and trends of arctic tourism. I will present some of the previous studies and work of researchers such as Alain A. Grenier who has contributed much to the field of polar and arctic tourism research. After finding a definition to the field of arctic tourism, I will move on to examine the representations of the Arctic area, and study their influence on the images and beliefs people hold of the Arctic – as an area and as a term.

2.1 Arctic tourism

Tourism is most often defined in relation to *leisure*. According to MacCannell (1999) leisure, then, is related to cultural experiences. There is a distinction between the work life and the leisure and culture side of life, as the latter is more concentrated in vacations, amusements, play and games (MacCannell, 1999). Returning to the initial definition by Hall and Johnston (1995), polar tourism is understood to be all "travel for pleasure or adventure within polar regions, exclusive of travel for primarily governmental, commercial, subsistence, military or scientific purposes". This definition supports MacCannell's view of holiday as time of leisure separated from the work life, although the Arctic locations offer a very different setting to the leisurely activities, in comparison to other popular holiday destinations.

Arctic tourism is usually understood to be tourism focused on the Arctic areas of the world, whether this is traveling to Antarctica or the North Pole. According to Grenier (2004) arctic tourism can perhaps be easiest defined as a trip to an area, where the surrounding circumstances are unusual compared to the traveler's usual living environment. These differences can be seen in the climate, flora and fauna, and

sometimes also as differences between the cultures (Grenier, 2004). Boyd and Hall (2005) have investigated the usage of the concept “unique” in relation to tourism in peripheral areas. Peripheral areas often contain unique natural capital, and this element of uniqueness is being used by the tourism industry for differentiating the region from other nature-based or ecotourism destinations. (Boyd & Hall, 2005, p. 278) This way, the peripheral location can be turned into an asset, and a destination that before was unreachable or unknown to the masses can become a tourism hotspot. This has greatly been the case with tourism in the Arctic.

Arctic tourism must not be mixed with winter tourism, which again has a strong emphasis on the winter activities as part of the travel. Both arctic as well as winter tourism still strongly rely on the images of the north, counting on the cultural images people hold of the Arctic areas. (Grenier, 2004, p. 80–81.) According to Hall and Johnston (1995), the tremendous popularity of the Arctic regions can partially be explained by their ability to provide the visitor “an image and a possible experience of arctic wilderness”. This cultural structure, the image of the arctic wilderness, reveals our perhaps subconscious understanding (often both the visitor's and the marketer's) of the Arctic landscape and offers us a base of functioning in this specific surrounding (Hall & Johnston, 1995). However, one must realize that the concept of “wilderness” is contextual: wilderness can be understood differently depending on the interpreter's background, just as definitions of 'arctic wilderness' can differentiate in relation to the context. In Nordic countries the concept of wilderness is commonly understood positively, as undisturbed nature area with little permanent human inhabitance, yet actively used by local communities, whereas in North American context the concept is understood in negative light, as wilderness is seen as dangerous or life threatening natural environment were human beings cannot survive (Saarinen, 2002). In the field of tourism, arctic and northern wilderness has been used as touristic wilderness production, as tourism marketing with travel programs and literature construct images of remote Arctic or Northern wildernesses. (Boyd & Hall, 2005, p. 40.) I will investigate the usage

of these images and ideas constructed by tourism marketing and media further in the sub-chapter 2.2 Representation of the Arctic.

Due to the vastness of the Arctic area the traveler cannot simply "visit the Arctic", but more likely only small parts of it. A tourist wanting to travel to the Arctic area must choose whether they want to travel to the parts of so called southern or sub-Arctic area where existing tourism infrastructure can be found, or higher up to the Arctic polar area, where basically no infrastructure exists. (Grenier, 2004, p. 234.) The amount of travelers in the Arctic areas and especially the southern parts of the Arctic is significantly bigger than the amount of travelers visiting the southern polar areas or Antarctica. The northern Arctic has a much longer history with tourism activities, considerably bigger reachable land area, more tourism destinations, multiple route connections and a better selection of different sights. Activities based on the nature are the core product in the Arctic area, and the main attraction is the natural landscape, the untouched wilderness. (Hall & Johnston, 1995, p. 11–12.) Grenier (2004) reminds that the element of safety should be considered and studied profoundly in tourism concentrating on the remote areas of the world, especially in the High Arctic where no infrastructure exists. A traveler heading to areas such as the North Pole or Antarctica must have certain abilities, such as good physical condition, and in some situations they must be able to count on their abilities to survive on their own. (Grenier, 2004, p. 80–81.)

Arctic tourism can also be defined to be a form of travel that highlights the geographical and cultural remoteness in the proximity of Arctic areas. However, a travel destination conceived to be "arctic" can also be located outside the geographical Arctic areas, in destinations where arctic conditions similar to the actual Arctic areas can be found. This phenomenon is affected by the cultural understanding or the images the traveler holds of the arctic conditions. (Grenier, 2004.) This notion is interesting in the case of Finland and Finnish Lapland, when varying standpoints to the question whether Finland actually is an arctic country or not, can be found. If you compare Finnish Lapland to other places

commonly perceived arctic, for example Greenland, Svalbard or Russian far north, the differences in both natural elements such as vegetation or fauna as well as infrastructure and human population are dramatic. Norway has chosen to use the term “north” in their marketing instead of “arctic”, although the country reaches further north than Finland. Thus, the whole question of whether tourism in Finnish Lapland should be branded as arctic tourism is debatable. Noteworthy is, that not all tourism companies use the term “arctic” in their marketing or branding, and therefore the image built by national or regional tourism marketing and branding using the concept of “arctic” might be misleading regardless of the actions of tourism businesses.

Tourism to the Arctic region has been categorized and labeled actively: the label of arctic tourism is accompanied by labels such as polar tourism, nature-based tourism, winter tourism, sustainable tourism and ecotourism, just to mention few. An important question of whether tourism in the Arctic region should be called arctic tourism in the first place must be asked: is *all* tourism automatically *arctic* simply because of the location, or do certain *activities* and *motives of travel* make tourism fall under a specific category? Is travel to Finnish or Norwegian Lapland for winter activities such as skiing automatically arctic tourism, or would winter tourism suit the purpose better? Is a tourist traveling to Iceland to experience and enjoy the thermal spa of Blue Lagoon an arctic tourist, or would the motives of, for instance wellness tourism, fit better for the context? What then is the distinction between polar tourism and arctic tourism? Where is the line drawn between labeling something arctic instead of polar, for is not all arctic research automatically also polar research (when using a geographical approach, Arctic being one of the geographical poles)? Also, the notion that research conducted on the context of Antarctica is usually *not* specifically labeled as antarctic tourism (commonly polar tourism, for exception see also Bauer, 2001) raises the question why has arctic tourism as a label been distinguished from the 'original' concept of polar tourism. Of course, when the focus of the business, research or any activity is performed in the specific context of the Arctic, is the use of the concept *arctic tourism* justified. However, since there are a lot of similarities in the characteristics of both the Arctic and

the Antarctic contexts, should also arctic tourism be linked to the wider context of polar tourism.

Grenier (1998; 2004; 2007) as one of the first researchers to attend to this problem of labeling polar tourism, has acknowledged the lack of research on the study of the meaning of polar tourism – both as a term and as an experience. Grenier has provided a sociological perspective to the definition of polar tourism, arguing that "the main characteristic of polar tourism is the possibility to experience unusual through the social and cultural conditions provided by the geographical remoteness of the Polar Regions/destinations" (Grenier, 1998; 2004; 2007). According to Grenier (2007, p. 59) the notion of experiencing something unusual and different, an element with a special meaning, can be understood as encountering an experience in opposition to the experiencer's concept of normality. This separation from normality is the key element of what makes any tourism destination 'exotic' or special (Grenier, 2007, p. 59).

Hall and Boyd (2005, p. 274) have criticized this academic tendency of over-producing labels, that have further led to developing certain typologies describing both the tourist and the type of tourism. Also, the tourism industry actively assigns labels to regions and tourism destinations based on the experiences that the destination can offer visitors (Hall and Boyd, 2005, p. 274). This is the case also in Finland and Finnish Lapland, where the tourism sector and businesses are increasingly using the term "arctic" in their marketing. When choosing to label a region or a specific form of tourism, one should keep in mind that in most cases tourists do not see themselves strictly as, for instance ecotourists or arctic tourists. Rather than labeling and categorizing tourists, the tourism industry should understand that the *tourism experience* is comprised of a variety of sub-experiences relating to elements such as nature, culture, and adventure. (Hall and Boyd, 2005, p. 274.) This dilemma of categorizing tourism under certain labels describing the form of travel interests me, especially in the context of tourism to Finnish Lapland, and I will discuss this question further in Chapter 5, the analysis of the study results.

Grenier (2007) argues polar tourism to be “fixed in a mindset that requires and combines a romantic perception of a given type of location, with the need for an alternative and distinctive experience”. The romantic perception refers to the appreciation of the aesthetics, nature and beautiful landscapes, as redefined by the Romantic Movement. The search for alternative and distinctive experiences, then, refer to the sociocultural tools for identity construction provided by the Polar regions, as their harsh conditions provide the visitor with the possibility to challenge oneself and learn about one's strengths and limits (Grenier, 2004; 2007). Grenier (2007, p. 60) continues by stating that polar tourism is “more than the mere experience of extreme physical geography”, for it is also (and perhaps above all) about the *collective imaginary*, which further emphasizes the need for social approaches in the study of polar and arctic tourism. Emmerson (2010, p. 4) states that “the Arctic is above all an idea”, a mental imaginary and framework that can only be described, often with terms such as cold, isolated, empty and white. This mental framework helps us to form our personal picture of the Arctic, though often the preconceptions people hold of the area are wrong: some parts of Arctic are *not* isolated but rather easily accessible, and the Arctic is *not* an empty wilderness area filled with snow and pristine nature, but populated region with a number of cultures inhabiting the vast area (Emmerson, 2010, p. 4). This important notion of the collective imaginary is indeed what this research aims to investigate closer. As Hamelin (1978) called this social degree 'nordicity' in the context of Canadian north, and Grenier (2007) refers to it as the degree of 'polarity' in relation to polar tourism research, I have personally (ironically, adding to the set of already existing labels) found the term of 'arcticity' to best describe the contemporary social definitions of arctic tourism.

History of tourism to the Arctic

The Polar regions of the world have been the focus of activities of people such as explorers, whalers, seal hunters and scientists for centuries, all of these people usually originating from outside the Polar regions (Roura, 2011). During the “Age of

Exploration" from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, the Arctic was was considered to be more of an obstacle for travel than an object in itself. The High Arctic was left untouched and considered as mere emptiness, much like the way it was pictured in the maps of that time. The information and knowledge of the Arctic mostly based on rumors and exaggerations, until in the mid-nineteenth century the explorations headed north to the Arctic. (Emmerson, 2010, p. 14–15.) The first Arctic explorers were viewed as heroes and they became the very symbols of Arctic – especially two men: the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen and the Icelandic-Canadian-American Vilhjalmur Stefansson (Emmerson, 2010, p. 16–17). These explorations marked also the first steps for the future development of arctic tourism, as the heroic and often also tragic Arctic expeditions of early 1800s increased the interest to the Arctic (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010; see also Emmerson, 2010). For the people at home, newspaper articles and books describing the expeditions became popular reading. This was the starting point of tourism to the Arctic regions.(Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 26.)

The so called pioneers of arctic tourism were often independent adventurers seeking for the recreational opportunities offered by the Arctic wilderness. By the mid-1800s mountaineering became increasingly popular and exploratory trips to the mountains of Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Norway were made. Also other recreational activities such as sport hunting and fishing were popular, but mainly a past-time of the wealthy. Partnerships evolved between the indigenous people of the Arctic and the hunting and fishing visitors. What started as dangerous expeditions of the curious few, and became the recreational past-time of wealthy and privileged, was soon to be revolutionized as the Arctic transformed into mass tourism destination. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 27.)

According to Grenier (2011) tourism in the Arctic (and Antarctic) areas began as soon as means of transportation, whether it was seaborne, airborne or based on land, made the travel possible. The Industrial Revolution in North America and Europe had by the 1850s increased personal wealth and transformed the societies. The expansion of leisure

and tourism worldwide became possible as railroads and steamships enabled access to places before inaccessible, including the Arctic. Travel costs were low due to the competition between transport companies and already by the late 1800s tourism had become leisure for the masses. The curious tourists were intrigued by the glaciers and fjords, the unique wildlife and the indigenous people of the Arctic. By 1900, tourism to the Arctic was a flourishing and increasingly diverse industry, with adventurous independent travelers as well as group tourism. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 28.) Still, for the most part of its history arctic tourism was a privilege of the successful and wealthy, and the amounts of travelers were fairly small (Hall & Johnston, 1995, p. 11–12).

In the Nordic countries Arctic tourism and research was first given attention in 1827 when the explorer Robert Everest visited Nordkapp (Picture 3), the northernmost part of the land area of Norway (Hall & Johnston, 1995; Jacobsen, 1994). Regular steam ship cruises were arranged around the coastline of northern Norway already in 1845, and from the 1870s the "romantic pleasure cruises" of upper and middle classes of mostly British and French tourists took the arctic tourism to a more romantic direction. The Romantic Movement was characterized by its search for unique landscapes and wild nature, which could be found from the Scandinavian Arctic. These early voyages to the North appear to have been a response to the traditional Grand Tours. (Jacobsen, 1994.) During its history, arctic tourism was affected by a number of demographic and global trends which influenced the way people viewed travel, how they chose their holiday destination and what activities they wanted to include in their holiday (Jacobsen, 1994).

Tours to the European Arctic still formed an important part of international tourism in the late 1990s, although the number of travelers was significantly smaller in comparison to cross-national travel in general. The European Arctic areas are easily accessible, either individually (i.e. by car or camper van) or as a part of a group (i.e. charter flights, coach trips or cruises). Aside from the Scandinavian Arctic areas, Iceland, Greenland and Svalbard attract international tourists through air travel and cruise or other ships.

(Jacobsen, 1994.) Today, polar tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of global tourism, each Arctic country receiving hundreds of thousands of visitors every year (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 25). Arctic tourism has become a diversified industry operating and providing livelihoods for people throughout the year in all eight Arctic countries (USA, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and the Russian Federation). Tourism plays a vital role in the economy of these countries and tourism developments are actively being made to better answer to the tourists' expectations. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 30.) In the year 2012 the international tourist arrivals to Northern Europe alone were almost 65 million – a steady annual growth in comparison to the 37,7 million international tourist arrivals in year 1995 (UNWTO, 2013).

Today, people view the Arctic as a common tourist destination, partially because the Arctic is touristically produced and anyone can buy a tour in the Arctic (Viken according to Rantala, 2014). As mentioned in several occasions in this study, the importance as well as the interest to the Arctic areas of the world has perhaps never been bigger than it is today. Inevitably this also affects tourism industry, as it is not anymore only scientists and researchers who are interested in the Arctic, but increasingly also other people, hoping to experience the Arctic on their own.

Identifying motives of travel to the Arctic

According to Jacobsen (1994) tourism could be compared to fashion industry, as the changes in tastes and preferences are inevitable. Although many authors (see Grenier, 2004, 2007, 2011; Hall & Johnston, 1995; Hall & Saarinen, 2010, Jacobsen, 1994; Maher, Stewart & Lück, 2011; Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010) have given definitions and presented their views of the dominant motives (i.e. adventure, unique nature) to Arctic tourism, as the preferences of travel change with the constantly changing trends, it is necessary to question whether these lists of motives are still accurate. What are the presented motives of travel to the Arctic then? Grenier (2004) claims, that those tourists who travel to the Arctic regions of the world (polar tourists) base their desire to see

these areas simply on curiosity, and often see themselves as adventurous people. This sense of adventure is explained by the curiosity to walk the paths not many people have walked before and see the almost untouched nature (Grenier, 2004, p. 78–79). Stonehouse and Snyder (2010) investigate the tourists' interest in the Arctic region in relation to the general definitions of both tourism and polar regions: tourism is often defined as travel for pleasure, but the public image of polar regions as "remote, cold and inhospitable" does not exactly promote pleasure – so who would want to spend their vacation in the Arctic? The answer: millions of people each year. The search for "pleasurable experiences" is still present in the contemporary travel to the Arctic region (i.e. by cruise ships), although a trend of tourists seeking for "adventurous experiences" (i.e. mountaineering and other activities based in nature) has been identified as well. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010.)

Adventure is considered to be a particularly important factor to Arctic tourism also according to Jacobsen (1994), who has described adventure to "a momentary possibility to slip through the realities of everyday life". Adventurous travelers have a desire to travel to the end of the world, explore wilderness areas and challenge themselves. In relation to Arctic tourism, this would indicate a development towards a stronger interest in the less-visited areas of Northern Russia, Greenland and Northern Canada, for they still have fairly pristine wilderness areas for the adventurous tourists to encounter. (Jacobsen, 1994.) However, as tourism has developed rapidly during the last decades, even the furthest corners of the world can now be reached. This has undoubtedly influenced Arctic tourism, as even those previously untouched areas have become utilized by tourism consumption. Also, when areas that used to be experienced as "true wilderness" are losing their popularity, and people feel the need to travel even further to reach the last remaining wilderness areas, the Arctic areas have become tourism hotspots. (Grenier, 2004, p. 216.)

In the context of this study, it is relevant to note that these elements of adventure and exploration do not necessarily apply for the tourists traveling to Finnish Lapland or

Rovaniemi, for the area is reasonably modern and populated, the tourism infrastructure is considerably well developed and untouched nature areas can hardly be found anymore. However, the tourists visiting the area might still experience their visit to be very extreme and adventurous, if the environment differs greatly from what they are accustomed to in the familiar surroundings of their home countries. Also, one cannot say that all tourists want the same things of their holiday. Tourists visiting the Arctic regions of the world cannot be categorized in rigid groups, but they must be considered as individuals with their individual motives of travel.

Stonehouse and Snyder (2010, p. 30) have classified tourist markets of arctic tourism to include five different categories: mass tourism (seaborne and airborne), fishing and hunting, nature tourism, adventure tourism and finally culture and heritage tourism. *Seaborne mass tourism* attracts tourists interested in the possibility of sightseeing with the comfort of pleasurable transportation and accommodation. The cruise ship industry to the Arctic is in fact the largest provider of mass tourism in the Arctic. Cruises to the Canadian and Norwegian Arctic are tremendously popular, but also destinations such as Alaska, Greenland, Iceland, Arctic Russia and the North Pole get their fair share of arctic cruise ship tourists. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 30–35; see also Grenier, 1998.) *Airborne mass tourism* was introduced to the Arctic as "large commercial jets with enormous passenger capacities" made the Arctic a more accessible place for the masses. The previously inaccessible Arctic destinations such as Longyearbyen in Svalbard or Kamchatka in the Russian Far East now have airports with regularly scheduled flights. The airborne access to the Arctic has resulted in increasing numbers and wider geographic distribution of tourists. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 35–36.) Direct charter flights from the United Kingdom to Finnish Lapland are one example of the increased ability to reach destinations outside the capital area by using commercial flights offered by travel operators.

The popularity of arctic tourism concentrated in the seasonal activities of *fishing and hunting* is explained by the large concentrations of wildlife and fish in some Arctic

areas. A touristic activity, that began with the native people of the Arctic hosting the visiting sportsmen in the 1800s, has proven to benefit the native communities greatly and has contributed to their economic self-sufficiency. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 37–39.) *Nature tourism* is mainly focused on the activities of observing and photographing wildlife in their natural habitats in various national parks, wildlife and marine sanctuaries and World Heritage sites across the Arctic (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 39–40). The form of tourism previously labeled as ecotourism and today most commonly known as sustainable tourism, is understood to be a form of tourism that "takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005).

Climate change and its impacts on the fragile Arctic environment has increased the popularity of nature tourism, for instance in the form of growing numbers of visitors traveling to Churchill, Canada to view the endangered polar bears. As nature tourism market keeps on booming with the trends of eco-, green and sustainable tourism, its economic benefits are significant. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 39–40.) The trend of nature-based and ecotourism is built on an interesting contradiction of people often genuinely wanting to do good, without realizing that their actions, travel to the already fragile areas of nature, in fact makes the situation worse. The psychological process of justification in the case of these eco-holidays, as well as in the sector of Arctic tourism, would be extremely interesting topic to look into: how do the people justify their travel to the areas, they know to be endangered to begin with?

Adventure tourism and activities have been recognized as a common form of arctic tourism by a number of arctic researchers (see i.e. Grenier; 2004; Hall & Johnston, 1995; Hall & Saarinen, 2010a; Jacobsen, 1994). The element of adventure provides a person with a sense of personal achievement through challenging oneself. Adventure tourism can take place in land-based environments, including activities such as mountaineering, hiking, glacier crossing, skiing and kayaking in the wilderness, or

marine environments, hosting activities like sea kayaking. The possibly fatal elements of remoteness and harsh weather conditions seem to be a part of the adventure and challenge. The adventure tourists hardly take part in guided tours and are not required to report their routes or schedules to the authorities. This means that adventure tourism in the Arctic is nearly impossible to manage. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 40–41.)

The final category of *culture and heritage tourism* in the Arctic attracts visitors who want to encounter local history, art and cultural traditions of mostly the native people of various Arctic nations. Probably the most common form of cultural tourism in the Arctic is the branch of indigenous tourism. Tourism dealing with the cultural and historical elements can also include elements of the other, previously mentioned categories. The sale of indigenous art, crafts or other goods is usually linked to tourism activities including encounters with the native people. (Stonehouse & Snyder, 2010, p. 41–43.) Tourists' interest in cultural and historical elements of the indigenous people of Arctic has caused problems as well, as acts of representing the indigenous people have been used by tourism companies. In Finland, regular tourist guides or non-Sámi reindeer herders have dressed up in replicas of traditional Sámi costumes to provide the tourists a staged "authentic" experience. Such exploitation of culture and tradition has become the downside of tourists' increased desire to experience the authentic cultures of the Arctic.

Things that attract tourists especially to the Arctic areas of the Nordic countries are the untouched nature and wilderness areas, national parks, every man's rights and the activities they allow, but also skiing and spending the holiday in the ski resorts of Lapland. When speaking of Arctic tourism one must, however, realize that large numbers of tourists and untouched nature and wilderness do not quite fit in the same sentence. The nature of the Arctic areas has without a doubt suffered from erosion due to the widespread tourism. When people have gone to the previously untouched areas of nature, marks of human presence such as paths, trails or even trash left behind in the nature, have begun to show in the nature with time. (Bernes, 1996, p. 129–136.) This

notion is supported by the results of LANDSCAPE LAB -project that investigated tourism land use and its consequences for tourism areas. The project results suggest that tourism land use in the fragile nature areas has significant deteriorating impacts for the nature of the areas, and detailed consideration of these impacts should be included in the planning of tourism areas. (Jokimäki & Kaisanlahti-Jokimäki, 2008.)

Another, increasingly popular branch of tourism is the one of northern lights tourism. Although the phenomenon of northern lights has fascinated people for centuries, only during the last decades has the tourism industry realized the potential of this tourist attraction. A study investigating northern lights in the context of experience economy and nature tourism by Rautanen (2012) suggests that northern lights tourism is fairly well-established in the Arctic countries, especially in Alaska and Sweden, and there is great potential for it also in Finnish Lapland and Svalbard. Increasing interest in the study of northern lights tourism has also resulted as research projects (see New turns in Arctic winter tourism, 2014) investigating the full potential of this branch of tourism. As northern lights are also one of the common features related to the images people hold of the Arctic, this branch of tourism could easily be connected to the field of arctic tourism as well.

Regarding winter and Christmas tourism and the tourist masses that travel to Finnish Lapland and Rovaniemi each winter, different motives bring tourists to the region: some travel to Rovaniemi to meet Santa Claus, get married in an igloo or simply to experience a different kind of Christmas. Again, it is useful to bear in mind the delineations of Arctic areas and how Rovaniemi is located in the sub-Arctic area, with considerably milder weather conditions and more infrastructures, in comparison to Svalbard, for example. It is arguable whether tourism in Rovaniemi and elsewhere in Southern Lapland should be called arctic tourism to begin with, or would definitions like “winter tourism” or “Christmas tourism” describe the tourism sector better. In addition to this, the destination of Rovaniemi does interest tourists in the summer season (usually lasting from June to August) too, although the main concentration of

tourism is received during the winter season (lasting from November to late January). According to Grenier (2004) arctic tourism is not limited to just one season, although it is mainly focused on spring and summer months, when the weather conditions are at their best. This notion is interesting in the context of Finnish Lapland and Rovaniemi, where in fact winter is the high season focused to Christmas tourism.

The visitors coming to Rovaniemi during summer months are often interested in the elements of nature and activities in relation to nature, silence, as well as the "ritual experience" of crossing the Arctic Circle (Saarinen, 2005; Grenier, 2007). The unique nature element of nightless summer nights when the sun does not set at all, could easily be seen as one motivational element of tourism to the North during summer months. However, the tourism in Rovaniemi during the summer months could perhaps best be described "nature-based tourism", although when the meaningful and ritual element of getting to cross the Arctic Circle is included, is there also justification to say that the motives of travel are alike with the ones of polar or arctic tourism. This discussion of seasons is important regarding the topic of this research, for the goal is to find out how do tourists visiting Rovaniemi understand the concept of "arctic" - both in winter and summer. The results of this study will also give an idea of whether the tourists visiting Rovaniemi and Finnish Lapland actually consider the region "arctic" and whether it is accurate or not for the tourism sector to promote the area as "arctic".

A study focused on the identification of the behavioral patterns and tourist profiles of Rovaniemi (Rovaniemen matkustajaprofiilit, 2012) suggests that there are five distinctive behavioral models and tourist profiles to be found in Finnish Lapland and Rovaniemi. These tourist profiles were arranged on the scale from package holiday tourists to the independent travelers. Beginning from the independent travelers, the *explorer* is a highly independent visitor, mainly interested in gaining authentic experiences and encounters with the locals. Explorers often avoid making plans or timetables for their visit, leaving room for spontaneity. The next profile is the *passer-by,* also a very independent visitor, stopping in Rovaniemi only briefly to get a good

night's rest and fill up supplies before continuing further up north, where less infrastructure exists. The *pilgrim* is the third recognized tourist profile, a visitor coming to Rovaniemi mainly to gain meaningful experiences and fulfill ritual expectations such as crossing the Arctic Circle, meeting Santa Claus, seeing northern lights, a polar bear or a reindeer. A pilgrim usually plans his/her trip well beforehand or buys a package-holiday. (Rovaniemen matkustajaprofiilit, 2012, translations by author.)

The *silence seeker* represents the fourth tourist profile, a visitor coming to Rovaniemi in search for peace and quiet. Elements such as silence, aesthetic and clean nature, and the unique natural phenomena of nightless summer nights and the polar night in the winter inspire this type of tourists. The areas of wellness and health tourism, yoga and meditation as well as the increasingly popular phenomenon of mindfulness are all potential ways to reach and attract the silence seeker. Finally, the fifth identified tourist profile is the *hero of the Arctic Circle,* a visitor arriving to Lapland for the purposes of enjoyment and entertainment, usually paid by the employer (business-/conference tourism and incentive travel). The package holidays include expensive entertainment such as safaris and pre-planned programs for the duration of the visit. (Rovaniemen matkustajaprofiilit, 2012, translations by author.)

Of these behavioral patterns of the identified tourist profiles, the ones preferring a more independent form of travel can be said to be closest to the identified arctic tourists. The profile of the pilgrim holds the most striking similarities in interests in relation to the ones commonly described arctic tourists' to hold. This sub-chapter has presented a variety of different motives identified common to travel and tourism to the Arctic. However, all-inclusive generalizations of people's motives to travel cannot be made, since in the contemporary world we live in, the different trends, popular destinations and forms of travel develop and change all the time. Also, tourists should be viewed as individuals with their personal preferences and motivational interests, recognizing that their choice of holiday destination can have plentiful and unique motives behind it – also in the case of arctic tourism.

2.2. Representation of the Arctic

The images people hold of the Arctic are often influenced by the map projection of the region, which makes, for example Greenland, look nearly as large as North America (Jacobsen, 1994). The northern arctic area, Arctic, and its southern counterpart Antarctic have been represented in a very similar way, although the areas significantly differ from one another: one is land surrounded by seas, whereas the other one sea area surrounded by countries. They are both visually pictured the same way: as remote, white landscapes full of snow and ice, with a reputation of being harsh locations to their visitors. This way of picturing the areas is based on the extreme conditions of the areas, whether it is the climate, geographical remoteness or for instance the unusual fauna found in the locations. When the Arctic areas are given a human face with the image of indigenous people, is Antarctica experienced to be even more inhuman, since it has no permanent human inhabitancy at all. (Grenier, 2004, p. 203.)

In recent years the representation of the Arctic polar region has changed, as tourist consumption has become increasingly entwined with the visualization and representation of the region. Creation of images, myths and place identities have an increased role in the way Polar Regions are represented in the contemporary world. (Hall & Saarinen, 2010b.) One does not have to think too long to come up with images typically representing "arctic": ice, snow, animals such as penguins and polar bears (often in wrong polar context, i.e. pictured or imagined outside their actual living environment) and in the specific context of Rovaniemi, Santa Claus, reindeer and northern lights have been the reoccurring themes in the visualization of the Arctic. Another common and often seen visual idea of the Arctic is a mental image of a vast and empty landscape, filled with snow and ice. In this type of image of the Arctic human presence, infrastructure or even animal populations are hardly present.

Saarinen (2005) has examined the construction of the ideas of Northern wildernesses for touristic purposes in Northern Finland. These so called touristic wildernesses are based on the consumption, marketing, and visualizing of natural environments, as well as staging wilderness settings solely for touristic purposes. In advertising, this means the usage of positive images such as authenticity, naturalness and freedom. In reality, the touristic wilderness is nothing more than a commercialized space and a commodity, a resource that can be produced, reproduced, replicated and consumed. It is based on the representation of "wild, free, harsh and rugged nature", and their relation to modern consumerism. (Saarinen, 2005, 40–41.) The representations of the Arctic are often similar to the ones presented by Saarinen (2005), as the elements of nature and wilderness are strongly related to the public image of the region.

A study (Müller, 2012) examining tourism brochures marketing Finland and Finnish Lapland shows, that elements in close relation to the commonly identified features of "arctic" are actively used in the printed marketing material of both national and regional marketing. Elements such as snow, ice, northern lights and reindeer have been and are still actively used in the tourism marketing of Finland and Finnish Lapland. The usage of elements such as visual representation of a Christmas theme, Santa Claus and indigenous people have decreased in the printed tourism marketing material of the whole country, but still strongly present in the tourism marketing material of Finnish Lapland and especially Rovaniemi – the city declared as hometown of Santa Claus. (Müller, 2012; see also Visit Finland, 2014 and Visit Rovaniemi, 2013.)

The marketing of Lapland is strongly based on the visual images of wilderness and elements such as the northern lights, yet highlighting the developed and well-functioning infrastructure and services (Müller, 2012). The Lapland brand (Lapland Above Ordinary, 2013) emphasizes five factors which make Lapland attractive: 1) Rich in nature (close relation to nature), 2) Creative madness ("positive originality" and individuality), 3) Open and Arctic (international and transparent meeting point in the Arctic region), 4) Arctic magic (magic that cannot be described, only experienced) and

5) Consider it done! (innovative expertise on international and local matters). The message this new brand work delivers inevitably tries to link Finnish Lapland to the Arctic region and discussion stronger than before. Why is it then, that Finnish Lapland is so aggressively marketed as "arctic"? As mentioned in the introduction of this research, the image people hold of the Arctic areas of the world has altered, as the areas previously viewed as remote and empty peripheries have become exotic, interesting and sexy (Østhagen, 2012). This might be a partial explanation to the question why is Finland and Finnish Lapland marketed with the terms and images of "arctic". Also, since Finland does not hold any Arctic coastline (unlike all the remaining fellow Arctic nations) can the increased use of the term in the marketing and public speech concerning Finland be seen as a way to highlight Finland's arctic knowledge, nature, expertise and belongingness to the Arctic decision-making, to the rest of the world.

In the field of marketing research, it is widely accepted that images of a holiday destination play an important role in travel decision making (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000, p. 37). However, tourism promotion does not alone form the image a tourist holds of the destination. Instead, the promotion of a destination is interdependent with many other information sources that influence the decision making concerning the projected and perceived images people hold (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007, p. 15.) According to Govers, Go and Kumar (2007) the promotion of destination image has many sources, such as promotion (advertising and brochures), the opinions of other people (family and friends, travel agents), media reporting (newspapers, magazines, television news reports and documentaries) and popular culture (motion pictures, literature). Together these elements form a "flood of information", a concept introduced by Reynolds (1965, p. 69), describing a mental construct based upon certain impression chosen from a flood of information. Accordingly, also in the case of representing an image of the Arctic through destination marketing, other information sources (as presented above) and the images they produce should be taken into consideration.

Further, Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) claim that as tourists are involved in an ongoing search for more information about their vacation destination by collecting a significant amount of information of the destination before the actual experience, the tourist creates an image of the destination, that represents the travel experience. The destination image also sets criteria to the evaluation of the actual destination: if tourists in the destination encounter experiences that differ greatly from their expectations, formed from the influence of destination marketing and other sources of information, can their evaluations of the destination be very negative (Fairweather & Swaffield, 2002, p. 293). This notion of tourist satisfaction is very important in the case of marketing ”arctic” destinations: if the elements used in the marketing of the destination become the valuable features selected from the flood of information by the tourists, can the tourist experience be negative if the tourist does not encounter these ”promised”, projected elements during their holiday. This can be the case with, for instance, northern lights: if the element of northern lights is actively used in the various sources of information and marketing of the arctic destination, but the tourist fails to see the northern lights personally during the visit, can this influence the overall experience negatively (Haantie, 2013). Same applies with the popularly used images of harsh, arctic climate conditions, polar bears and empty wilderness: if such images are being used to market tourism destinations actually based in relevantly urban surroundings and human infrastructure, such as the tourism destination of Rovaniemi, is the tourism marketing sending a contrived image of the destination to the tourists.

Another way, in which the tourists can encounter negative experiences and become dissatisfied, is when the hosts and local people do not represent the projected promise (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007, p. 17). This can be the case, when producing images of indigenous people or certain ”arctic” style of living in the destination promotion. In the case of Lapland, the Sámi people and projections of their culture and lifestyle (often in outdated form, producing images of traditional tipi-tents formerly used in place of houses) are frequently used in connection to the produced images of “arctic” (Tuulentie, 2009, p. 99). When a tourist expecting to see locals (i.e. the Sámi, often imagined only

in their traditional clothing) and hosts lead a life of constant survival against the extreme arctic conditions arrives to Rovaniemi, is the confusion and disappointment understandable, if the local populations do not represent these images. Fortunately, other sources of information influencing the destination image and expectations add truthful and realistic features to the destination image. The phenomenon of producing contrived images of the north and the Arctic is, however, something the tourism sector and marketing organizations should pay attention to and avoid when possible, in order to not mislead the tourists too much.

On the other hand, tourists visiting the Arctic might have a critical approach to the tourism destination and the images projected of it through tourism marketing and media (Lüthje, 2005). Like all marketing and promotion of goods, services or destinations, also tourism marketing is based on the principle of creating desirable images which result in the viewer wanting to buy the marketed product or in the case of tourism destination marketing, travel to the destination. Also tourists should be considered to have common criticism towards marketing and the possibly contrived images it produces, although it should not be expected of them, this way justifying the use of contrived images.

3. GENERATING INFORMATION THROUGH HUMAN INTERACTION

The personal contact and the continually new insights into the subjects' lived world make interviewing an exciting and enriching experience.
(Kvale, 1996.)

This chapter focuses on the presentation of the method used for the creation of research data in this research. The chapter provides an introduction to the method of interviewing and presents detailed examples of the applications of interviewing in practice, with special relation to the semi-structured research interview, which was used in this research. The choices made, as well as the challenges encountered in the application of interviewing are explained to the reader, in order to open the use of interviewing in a tourism research study. The decision of conducting research interviews as a method for collecting research data will be evaluated critically, as well as its role in the field of qualitative research.

3.1 Interviewing tourists

Conducting interviews has perhaps become the most popular way of collecting information on all fields of society. The sociologist David Silverman has talked about so called "interview society", where interviews have become a fundamental way for us to make our lives more understandable. (Ruusuvuori & Tiittula, 2005, p. 9.) In this study the choice of using interviews as a methodological tool for gathering information felt logical, when the goal of the study is to produce new information about individuals' own ways of thinking and perceiving the term arctic. Using interviews as a research method enables me as a researcher to bring together the tourists' personal insights and perceptions of "arctic": in other words, to produce information relevant to the study. Although conducting interviews seems like a very "safe", ordinary and highly used method of qualitative research, in this research I found that interviewing tourists was the most reasonable choice of method. The research results, to be achieved by asking individuals' of their perceptions and images of "arctic", can be captured best and

“purest” through human interaction during a research interview. Other approaches, such as participatory observation used in ethnographic methodology were considered as well, but ruled out as they could not have reached all the same results as using interviewing would.

Before entering the field and interviewing tourists I had to familiarize myself with the theory, different approaches and practices of interviewing. In addition to this, I had to consider factors such as the positioning of myself as a researcher in relation to the tourists I will be interviewing, decide the research questions and rehearse the interview situation (Hakkarainen, 2012; Ruusuvuori & Tiittula, 2005). It might sound like a lot of unnecessary time used on preparations, when the method is based on simple human interaction. It is, however, exactly that what makes the preparations so essential, for many ethical and practical issues must be considered before interviewing people for the purposes of a research. Interviewing tourists was chosen as the form of generating information about tourist' experiences and understandings of “arctic”, in order to find out whether the international tourists visiting Rovaniemi conceive the destination as something “arctic” and use the location as a ground for the formation of their “arctic experiences” - if they encounter such at all.

3.2 Choosing the form of interview

When considering using interviews as a research method the researcher must note that there are a variety of different types of interviews: interviews that are highly structured and researcher controlled, semi-structured interviews as well as highly unstructured and uncontrolled interviews. Structured interviews usually have standardized questions that are always asked in the same order, and in some cases a premade questionnaire can be used. Structured interviews are often used in large-sample surveys and most commonly in quantitative research. Qualitative researchers, then, are usually interested in evocative communication of people's life experiences, emotions and identities. Therefore, they prefer conducting interviews that are less structured and offer the interviewees

opportunity to give more complex and thorough accounts of their personal experiences. (Hugh-Jones, 2010; Hakkarainen, 2012.)

The researcher must decide already before entering the field whether the interview should be done structured, semi-structured or as an open interview, does the interview include certain themes or functionality or is it perhaps an ethnographic interview. The researcher should ensure that the chosen form of interview suits the purpose of the study and provides answers to the set research questions. The different forms of interviews start from the simple division between an interview conducted with one individual and group interview. (Hakkarainen, 2012.) Although interviewing typically involves one researcher interviewing one participant at a time, there are ways to interview groups, use multiple interviewers, do repeat interviews and conduct electronic interviews (i.e. by instant messaging or email) or telephone interviews. (Hugh-Jones, 2010.) Although the decision to interview individuals, in this case tourists, was formed early on, I had to consider things such as the amount and length of the interviews before entering the field. I used semi-structured interviews for I wanted to leave room for spontaneity in the interview situation and not narrow down the possibilities to answer openly too much. Also, the choice of theory and using the methodological approach of IPA supported the usage of semi-structured interviews.

I chose to interview tourists individually to be able to better focus on and grasp the individual's perceptions and ideas of “arctic”, instead of definitions influenced by others comments (which could have been the case if choosing group interviews). Each interview conducted was unique, although the key themes covered and questions asked were always the same. Great variation in the length of the interview, amount of supporting questions asked, and the order in which the questions were asked occurred, largely based on the interviewee's answers. Just like any conversation, a research interview as a form of interaction between two people is always a 'living situation'.

3.3 Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview involves preparing questions in advance, but with freedom for the interviewee to raise aspects not necessarily anticipated by the researcher. This way, the qualitative researcher shows a commitment to understanding what is important to the interviewee rather than driving the interview along a pre-determined route. The interviewer also has the freedom to be flexible in the questions and to respond in natural ways in the interaction. (Hugh-Jones, 2010.) This element of flexibility was one of the main reasons semi-structured interviews were used in this research as well. In addition to this, I wanted to cover certain themes and ask certain questions from the interviewee's, which further explains why the approach of semi-structured interview was chosen instead of, for example, completely open interview.

The purpose of a qualitative research interview is to obtain qualitative descriptions of "life world" of the subject, with respect to interpretation of their meaning. In semi-structured interview there is a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as suggested questions. Yet at the same time there is openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the subjects. (Kvale, 1996.) In the case of this research, the goal was to investigate how do tourists visiting Finnish Lapland and Rovaniemi understand and define the concept of "arctic". The ten semi-structured interviews covered open-ended questions of the concept of "arctic", allowing the interviewee's to answer in their preferred way. In addition to this, certain themes (see Annex 1. Semi-structured interviews used in this study) relating to the geographical place (the Arctic), the social and natural context as well as the problematic (and its explanations) of defining the concept of "arctic" were covered – in close relation to the occurred themes of the interviewee's accounts. The interview questions were chosen based on the previous knowledge of arctic research and theory, the idea of Rovaniemi being an "arctic" destination given by tourism marketing, and the presumption that Rovaniemi is indeed considered "arctic" by the tourists visiting the city.

The less-structured or semi-structured interviews often have a precise theoretical framework supporting them. This means, that the interviews have a theory-informed view of the individual and the experiences they are trying to understand. (Hugh-Jones, 2010.) In this research, the theoretical framework of phenomenology was used to study tourist experiences. Further, the IPA method of analysis was applied to interpret these encountered tourist experiences and reach the perceptions tourists hold of the concept and term "arctic". However, in order to logically combine both the theoretical as well as the analytical framework with the empirical side of the study, the theoretical discussions of the meaning formation process and sense of place were investigated.

Semi-structured individual interviews are a method of data collection involving one interviewer and one interviewee. The interview is guided by a flexible frame including topics to be covered or certain questions to be asked during the interview, but the wording and the order of the questions may vary. The method requires active listening of the interviewees as well as probing for further information in case unanticipated topics come up. Semi-structured individual interviews are commonly used as a data collection technique when applying IPA on the data, since the focus is on individual experiential accounts. (Shaw, 2010.) Just as in any human interaction or interview situation, also in the application of semi-structured interviews, the progress of the interview cannot be foreseen. With the help of supporting themes and questions, I was able to bring the interviewee's focus back to the initial theme if the conversation started to stray off the topic. Active listening of the interviewees was essential, for different dialects or the level of some interviewees' English skills added its complications to the interview situation. This also meant that the initial remarks and interpretations made on the field, as well as the listening, reading and re-reading the transcripts was important, in order to ensure that the meanings and values the interviewees were giving to the concept "arctic" were understood as true as possible to the interviewee's original thoughts.

3.4 Interview as human interaction

When using interviews as a research method, ordinary people are the targets and sources of the information, and the interview situation is discussion and interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. However, certain guidelines and best practices are useful to follow in this interaction situation, and the researcher must be aware of them in order to successfully conduct research by interviewing. (Hakkarainen, 2012.) Openness and sharing information to the interviewee about the research is a key element to conducting ethical research. The interviewee must consent to the interview and remain the right to withdraw or change his/her mind about his/her consent at any time. Also, a level of anonymity must be guaranteed to the interviewee and the researcher must remember this promise when analyzing and representing the research data. (King, 2010.)

It is good to have a clear goal for the interview, and the roles for different people and parts of the interview situation should be clear to all participants. It is essential for the researcher to be clear about their role in the research situation: they can be a data collector, researcher, a reassuring listener, or a neutral person in the interview situation. There are also other factors that can possibly have an influence on the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, such as power distribution, personal chemistry, mutual language and trust. These are all factors the interviewer should take into consideration already when getting ready for the interview situation, so that in the actual interaction they would not come as a surprise. The basic order of the interview should be question – answer – acknowledgment. This minimizes the interviewer's influence on the results of the interview and further clarifies the roles of the different parties. The researcher must also bear in mind that there are various issues of research ethics to be considered before entering the field and interviewing people. (Hakkarainen, 2012; Ruusuvuori & Tiittula, 2005.)

To be able to detect the possible cultural differences between the interviewer and the interviewee, the researcher must make their own positions visible and analyze their influence on the research process. The researcher must be aware of the possible positions that could influence the research and its results and include this notion in the research text. (Ruusuvuori & Tiittula, 2005, p. 94-95.) Whether the clear positions of a *local* and a *tourist* result in conflicts is, of course, a matter of individuals. In this research, no such conflicts occurred – on the contrary, the tourists seemed more often to be genuinely interested in encountering a local person during their holiday. This tourists' willingness to get to know the culture and meet the local people has also been recognized in tourism research (see i.e. MacCannell, 1999; Rovaniemen matkustajaprofiilit, 2012), and seems to be a lasting interest of some tourists.

In this research, I clearly positioned myself as a researcher, explaining the interviewees the purpose of the research (to study the definitions of "arctic") and my role as the person conducting this research as my Master's thesis to the field of tourism research studies. The interviewee's consent to recording the interview was always asked, and their anonymity was guaranteed. First after the explanatory introduction to the research was made, I moved on to ask the research interview questions (see Annex 1) based on the theme of the interview, the term "arctic. The dimension of power distribution should be discussed, since in the research interview position I was a local interviewing tourists: a setting which might (or might not) influence the answers provided to me by the interviewees. Also, differences in age, gender and cultural backgrounds are elements that could possibly have influenced the interviews, since I was a young Finnish woman interviewing tourists of different ages, genders and backgrounds. I did not, however, detect any hesitation or judgment being passed in the interview situations of this research. This could be explained, for example, by the rather homogenous group of respondents, coming from the countries of the U.S.A., Spain, Lithuania, South Korea and Australia. All of the interviews were conducted in English, which inevitably affected the amount of respondents, and the formation of the homogeneity of the group of interviewees. Although in this research the amount of Anglophone interviewees is

big, it does not mean that most of the visitors encountered in Santa Claus Village during the field work came from English speaking countries – rather, the English speaking people seemed to form a minority on both field work days (in winter and summer), but most of the remaining visitors to Santa Claus Village were reluctant or unable (i.e. language barrier, lack of time) to participate in a research interview in English.

When conducting an interview, the researcher must take into consideration the uniqueness of each interviewee and interview situation as well as the surrounding factors that may influence it. In some cases, a language barrier may occur and complicate the interaction and interview process. When interviewing people from different parts of the world, the researcher must be prepared for a situation like this that can complicate the interview situation. However, since it is practically impossible for the researcher to be completely prepared to face all possible cultural differences and their consequences for the interview situation, the existence and meaning the cultural differences have on the research project must be analyzed as a part of the whole research project (Ruusuvuori & Tiittula, 2005, p. 93-94). As the goal in this study was to interview tourists visiting Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi, it was impossible for me as a researcher to predict what nationalities or cultures the people I will interview are going to represent. However, acknowledging the possibility that I might face such challenges on the field enabled me to response better in such situations.

The fact that the research interviews were conducted in Santa Claus Village on the Arctic Circle inevitably has an effect on the answers: as in any location, the experiences and tourist accounts are therefore analyzed as encountered in this specific location of the tourist destination of Santa Claus Village. I realize that in the context of this specific location the references to Santa Claus as something “arctic” can be common in the interviewee's accounts, and will examine such accounts in close relation to the 'lived experience' situation of the tourists in that specific location.

4. PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE THEORY OF INTERPRETATION

The real is a closely woven fabric. It does not await our
judgment before incorporating the most surprising phenomena,
or before rejecting the most plausible figments of our imagination.
(Merleau-Ponty, 2002.)

This chapter will present the theoretical framework, phenomenology, and the method of analysis used in this research. The chapter provides a detailed yet easy to understand introduction to the philosophical school of thought called phenomenology, and provides examples of the practice of this study of phenomena. In this chapter I will also introduce the analytical method used in this study, IPA. To form a comprehensive picture of the theoretical and analytical framework of this study, the theory of interpretation, hermeneutics, will also be briefly presented, for these two theories are closely related to the analytical method of interpretative phenomenological analysis.

4.1. Introduction to phenomenology

The word *phenomenology* means "the study of phenomena", where the notion of a phenomenon coincides, roughly, with the notion of experience (Cerborne, 2006). The term "phenomenology" began to appear in philosophical texts already in the eighteenth century, used by philosophers such as Johann Heinrich Lambert, Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Lambert first described phenomenology as "a science of appearance", allowing us to proceed from appearances to discovering the truth. Kant, insipired by Lambert, later defined phenomenology as "the branch of science dealing with things in their manner of appearing to us", meaning that these properties, such as relative motion or color, are always dependent on the human observer. However, the explanation that had the biggest influence on the definition of phenomenology as we know it today came from Franz Brentano, who connected phenomenology to the study of descriptive psychology, a science of acts and contents of human consciousness. (Moran, 2000.)

After finding a definition for the term, one might still ask *what exactly* is phenomenology? According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 11) phenomenology is "a philosophical approach to the study of experience". It can also be described as the study of "essences", meaning the nature of a thing and the qualities that make a thing what it is. According to phenomenology, problems develop when attempting to find definitions of "essences", such as the essence of perception or the essence of consciousness. In addition to this, phenomenology is also a philosophy that puts essences back into existence, only expecting to find an understanding of human beings and the world relying on their facticity (the quality or condition of being a fact). (Husserl, 1965; Merleau-Ponty, 2002.)

Nonetheless, phenomenology has also been applied to tourism research in a number of cases, usually when studying tourist experiences (see Griffin & Hayllar, 2009; Uriely, 2005; Volo, 2009). Erik Cohen (1979) separated five modes of tourist experience in his renowned article *A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences*. The modes, recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential, have since been applied to the study of tourist experience in relation to phenomenology. Redfoot (1984) studied touristic authenticity, angst, and modern reality in his sociological approach to phenomenological research. A study by Mannel and Iso-Ahola (1987) uses phenomenological approach to examine the leisure and tourist experience from a psychological point of view. Suvantola (2002) has conducted phenomenological research investigating the meanings individuals create of themselves when experiencing touristic places. In his doctoral dissertation Johan Edelheim (2007) provides a thorough presentation of the history and applications of phenomenological approach in the field of tourism research. In Edelheim's doctoral dissertation, tourist experiences are examined from a linguistic-hermeneutic phenomenological viewpoint, alongside with post-structural narrative analysis (see Edelheim, 2007).

History of phenomenology

Phenomenology was introduced by Edmund Husserl in 1900-1901 as a radically new way of doing philosophy. It was an attempt to bring philosophy back from abstract metaphysical speculation, to come into contact with matters themselves, with concrete living experience (Moran, 2000, p. 1). For Husserl, phenomenology involves careful study of human experience, and the essential idea of phenomenological inquiry was that experience should be examined in its own terms, in the way it occurs (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 12). Husserl's original phenomenology had much in common with William James' *radical empiricism*, but more than anything else it was stimulated by Brentano's ground-breaking work in descriptive psychology, the *a priori* science of the acts and contents of consciousness. Husserl's phenomenological description of "things just as they are", in the manner in which they appear, is the very central motif of phenomenology. It meant that phenomenologists were free to engage with all areas of experience, as long as they remained faithful to the experience of the matters themselves. (Moran, 2000, p. 2).

According to Moran (2000, p. xiv) phenomenology cannot be simply understood as a method, since in its historical form it is primarily a set of people who developed phenomenological insights in contact and in parallel with the work of Husserl. Husserl's personal assistants Edith Stein, Martin Heidegger, Eugen Fink and Ludwig Landgrebe as well as his students Roman Ingarden, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Marvin Farber, Alfred Schütz and many others had a crucial impact on the development of the philosophy of phenomenology (Moran, 2000, p. 4). It was Heidegger, who moved away from Husserl's theoretical phenomenology and focused on the hermeneutic and existential emphases of phenomenological philosophy. In his work *Being and Time* Heidegger presented the subject of *Dasein* ("there-being" or "being-in-the-world") and argued that human beings are "thrown into" a world of objects, language and relationships, and their being-in-the-world is temporal, perspectival and always in-

relation-to something. This way, the interpretation of the meaning-making activities of people is central to phenomenological inquiry. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 16.)

Phenomenology was also translated into different philosophical directions, as it was explored by Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir and many others. Sartre extended the branch of existential phenomenology with focus on the developmental aspect of human being. He argued that we are constantly in the process of becoming ourselves, since the self is not a pre-existing unity, but rather an ongoing project. Merleau-Ponty then, shares Husserl's and Heidegger's devotion to understanding our being-in-the-world, but emphasizes the contextual phenomenology with focus on the *embodied* nature of our relationship to the world. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p 19–20.) Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are regarded the leading figures in phenomenological philosophy. For someone truly pursuing to understand phenomenology these very diverse thinkers and their personal inputs to the method and philosophy of phenomenology should be studied. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Moran, 2000.)

It is important to notice, that phenomenology does not fully fit into one agreed method, or accept just one theoretical outlook. Since the philosophers who were involved with phenomenology were indeed very diverse in their interests, their interpretation of the central issues of phenomenology, their application of what they understood to be the phenomenological method, and in their development of what they took to be the phenomenological program for the future of philosophy, it is clear that there are multiple standpoints to consider when defining phenomenology. Perhaps it is because of this diversity that phenomenology can be understood to be both a method and a general movement. (Moran, 2000, p. 3.) Although phenomenology appears to be a rather difficult field of philosophy to fully comprehend, the study of the central philosophers and their work on phenomenological philosophy helps to better understand the development of the movement, and to form a bigger picture of the school of thought in general. It is also good to keep in mind while reading philosophical literature about

phenomenology, that the fundamental purpose and goal of phenomenology is to connect with our everyday experiences. However, it is perhaps the application of phenomenological analysis in practice that can best enable someone to make sense of the diverse thoughts of phenomenological philosophy.

Although phenomenology never became the movement Husserl envisioned it to become, it still presents the most coherent philosophical alternative to the project of naturalizing consciousness. Phenomenology puts emphasis on examining the structures of consciousness from within, challenging all the attempts to explain consciousness in terms of natural science. Phenomenology can be understood to be a practice rather than a system, for it attempts to get to the truth of matters and to describe *phenomena*. This attempt is characterized by the thought of perceiving whatever appears in the very manner it appears, since this is the way it manifests itself to consciousness and to the "experiencer". In order to reach this, phenomenology seeks to avoid all misconstructions and impositions placed on an experience in advance. These preemptive prejudices, misconstructions and impositions can be drawn from religious or cultural traditions, everyday common sense thinking, or even from science. They can difficult the process of pure perception and hence should be avoided. In other words, explanations should not be given before the phenomena have been understood from within. (Moran, 2000; Kafle, 2011.)

According to phenomenology, any philosophical account of knowledge must remain faithful to the deepest experiential evidence. Phenomenology has to pay close attention to the nature of consciousness as actually experienced, and not as it is pictured by some philosophical tradition or common sense. Phenomenology seeks to describe things as they *appear* to human consciousness, meaning that problems, things, and events should be approached "taking into consideration their manner of appearance to consciousness". (Moran, 2000, p 6.) According to Merleau-Ponty (2002, p. viii) phenomenology attempts to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking into consideration its psychological origin and the explanations which scientists, historians

or sociologists can possibly provide. In phenomenological analysis, when a researcher is trying to interpret the experience of the research participant, he/she is actually engaged in a double hermeneutic: the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their experience. This notion of double-hermeneutics is essential in relation to the aim of direct and pure phenomenological descriptions of experiences, for the researcher must acknowledge and leave out all their personal attitudes and other factors that may influence the interpretation of the description. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 21–28.)

In his appraised book *Phenomenology of Perception* Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002) identified four separate qualities; description, reduction, essences and intentionality, that have been since considered as characteristics common within the different schools of phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty (2002) stated the aim of phenomenology to be *description* of phenomena. *Reduction* is understood to be the process of bracketing the phenomena in order to be able to return to the "things themselves", unaffected by factors such as personal prejudices. *Essence* again makes the experience what it is, being the core meaning of an individual's experience. Finally, *intentionality* is understood to be the complete meaning of the idea or the object, referring to individual consciousness. (Merleau-Ponty, 2002.) Individuals are always conscious to something, and their intentionality always reaches more than can be reached in the perception of a single perspective. (Kafle, 2011, p. 182; Merleau-Ponty, 2002.)

Phenomenological approaches

In the western tradition of phenomenology, three major schools of the phenomenological tradition can be found. They are *transcendental phenomenology*, *existential phenomenology* and *hermeneutic phenomenology.* The first, transcendental phenomenology is considered the original form of phenomenological philosophy introduced by Husserl (1859-1938). The core idea of transcendental phenomenology is that experiences must be transcended to discover reality, meaning they must go beyond

the limits of normal experiences. Husserlian phenomenology strongly relies on reduction, which refers to the act of suspending personal prejudices and attempting to reach the essence of the experience in a state of pure consciousness. Transcendental phenomenology this way holds a preference for the phenomenological attitude over the natural. The aim of this school of phenomenology is to discover and describe the "lived world". (Kafle, 2011, p. 186; Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 69.)

Existential phenomenology relies on the movement of existentialism, practiced by various philosophers such as Blaise Pascal, Soren Kierkegaard, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger. All the above mentioned existential phenomenologists agreed that philosophy was not to be conducted from a detached, overly objective or disinterested standpoint. Existential phenomenology differs from other schools of phenomenology by rejecting Husserl's idea of complete reduction. Instead, it relies on the belief of the individuals' description of everyday experience as a way of achieving a direct and genuine contact with the world. (Kafle, 2011, p. 188.)

Hermeneutic phenomenology (or philosophical hermeneutics) was born from the writings of an active adherent of Husserl, existential philosopher Heidegger (1889-1976). Hermeneutic phenomenology, much like existential phenomenology, is focused on subjective experiences of individuals and groups. Its primary goal is to reveal the world as experienced by the individual, meaning that it is concerned with the "life world" and the human experience as it is lived by the individual. (Kafle, 2011, p. 191.) Heidegger rejected Husserl's idea of bracketing all existing knowledge and argued that the conceptualization of an experience is always grounded in previous experience, or a fore-structure as Heidegger called it (Griffin & Hayllar, 2009). The hermeneutic school of thought differs from the existentialist one as it has a strong emphasis on interpretations as genuine descriptions of the world. Hermeneutic phenomenology attempts to reach the subjective experience, in order to find the genuine objective nature of things, as realized by the individual. (Kafle, 2011.) The school of hermeneutic phenomenology believes that a completely presuppositionless mind is not able to

understand the experiences of the world, which is why the hermeneutic interpretation was brought along to help understand and interpret the experiences. Contemporary hermeneutic phenomenology is usually practiced on the writings of Gadamer, a student of Heidegger (Edelheim, 2007, p. 63–64; Kafle, 2011, p. 188.)

Although the previously presented three major schools of phenomenology are actively used in western tradition of phenomenology, there are also other orientations to phenomenological practice. These different orientations, such as *linguistical*, *ethical*, and *experiential phenomenology*, as well as the *sociological phenomenology* by Cohen and Dann (see Dann & Cohen, 1991; and Holden, 2005), in addition to the popular orientations of *transcendental, hermeneutic* and *existential phenomenology*, all apply slightly different approaches to the phenomenon and the bracketing of it (Moran, 2002; van Manen, 2011). In this research the phenomenological orientations followed are the ones of hermeneutic and existential phenomenology. Firstly, hermeneutic phenomenology believes that the subjective experiences of individuals can be regarded as genuine descriptions of the world, influenced by one's (the tourist) prior experience. In this research, this belief is shared and the subjective tourist' accounts are interpreted using the analytical approach of IPA, which also follows the guidelines of both phenomenology and hermeneutics. Secondly, the beliefs of existential phenomenology emphasize the fact that all individuals exist as a part of the world, unable to exist separately of it – this is what Heidegger's *Dasein* basically means (Edelheim, 2007; Moran, 2002; Kafle, 2011, p. 184). In relation to the research at hand, I apply this existential remark in relation to the context in which the tourists are – as a inseparable part of this world, encountering experiences always in relation to something. With the combination of these two orientations of phenomenology I am able to investigate the tourist experiences and perceptions of "arctic" in the existential context of the world we live in, focusing on the way these tourists understand the experiences they encounter.

It is essential to remember that phenomenology is not only a philosophical school of thought, but also an increasingly popular approach to psychological research. This

research is linked to the psychological study of tourism in its goal to investigate the individual tourist's experiences, in comparison to, for instance, sociological approach to tourism. Also, the usage of the analytical approach of IPA, an analytical method mostly used in the field of psychological research, explains the need to open the psychological relations of this study. In the psychological field of phenomenological research, the basic aim of phenomenology is to describe and interpret people's perspectives and perceptions. This is done in order to be able to examine how these perspectives and perceptions are related to the people's experience of the world around them. (Sullivan, 2010.) Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) believe the key value of phenomenological philosophy for psychologists to be the rich source of ideas it provides on how to examine and comprehend the 'lived experience'. With the multi-disciplinary approach to the interpretation of tourist experiences of ”arctic”, I pursue to build a comprehensive framework for the understanding of the concept ”arctic” - as experienced by individuals, who are an inseparable part of the world they live in, in a social setting of being tourists on holiday.

Phenomenology of tourist experience

The phenomenological approach was developed as means to examine different phenomena within the field of social sciences. In this research, phenomenological approach was chosen as part of the analysis because of its desire to understand the colloquial world surrounding us, and focus on the individual's experience. The individual's perception is then reflected in the social situation of being a tourist on holiday, as well as the cultural background of the interviewees. The theory meets the needs of the research objective, as it provides a well-functioning framework to support the research analysis. Phenomenology, initially formed in the field of philosophy, has been widely used as a theoretical framework in qualitative studies seeking to grasp an idea of how an individual constructs the world and phenomena surrounding him/her. Phenomenological analysis aims to understand "how the everyday, inter-subjective world is constituted" from the individual's perspective (Schwandt, 2000).

Few words should be said about the conceptualizations of tourist experience. In the phenomenological school of thought references to experience are usually made in relation to the 'lived experience', a translated concept of the original German word for experiencing, *erleben.* When the German language makes a clear distinction between the two words it has for experience, the more technical word *Erfahrung* and the descriptive, practical word *Erlebnis,* in English the latter has been translated as 'lived experience' – or roughly translated "to live to see". What it means is basically "something one lives through personally" (Burch, 1990). Further, Burch (1990, p. 135) quotes Gadamer:

> Everything experienced [*Erlebte*] is experienced through oneself [*Selbsterlebtes*], and this part constitutes its meaning, that it belongs to the unity of this self and thereby contains a distinctive and irreplaceable relation to the whole of this one life (Gadamer, 1975, p. 60).

Another definition to experience would be to describe it as a holistic and functionally dependent structure (Skilters, 2011), which does not exclude the original meaning described above. Sharpley and Stone (2010) define 'tourist experience' to signify "the things people experience as tourists", and also (more importantly) "the experience of being a tourist in relation to one's normal socio-cultural existence". Pine and Gilmore (1999) take the concept of experience to a new level when viewing it as "a fourth economic offering" in the experience economy. In this research, experience is understood similarly to the phenomenological understanding of it, as a personal and contextual process of giving meaning to something.

According to Sharpley and Stone (2010) "the study of tourist experience is fundamental to the study of tourism". Plenty of (phenomenological and other) research has been made on tourist experience ever since the 1960s. The academic interest in tourist experience has mostly focused on issues such as tourists' valuations of their personal experiences, particularly tourism motivations and the meanings tourists assign to their

experiences (Uriely, 2005; Volo, 2009). Within the extensive history of studying tourist experiences Uriely (2005) identifies four major developments in its conceptualization that have affected the contemporary investigations regarding tourist experiences. These four identified trends are the shift from *differentiation to re-differentiation* of everyday life and tourism; from *generalizing to pluralizing* portrayals of the tourist experience; from f*ocusing on the toured objects to the attention given to the role of subjectivity* in the constitution of experiences; and from *contradictory and decisive statements to relative and complementary interpretations* (Uriely, 2005, p. 209). Viewed on a larger scale, the early theories of the tourist experience are considered as "modernist" forms of theorizing, whereas the contemporary conceptualizations on tourist experience relate to the "postmodernist" theorizing. The general cultural change towards postmodernity affected the fashion of constructing knowledge in tourism studies, introducing additions and new viewpoints to the study of tourist experience. (Uriely, 2005.)

The main purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how tourists understand and perceive the term "arctic". When conducting interviews with tourists, asking them how they comprehend the term "arctic", my goal as a researcher is to reach that understanding of how these individuals experience, see and structure this certain term and phenomenon. Hence, phenomenology provides this study with a supporting theoretical framework for examining the individuals' experience, and combined with the theories of *meaning generation* and tourists' *sense of place,* allows me to understand the tourist' perception process. The theory of meaning generation referred to in this research views all generation of meaning perceptually grounded: meaning is considered a perceptually and bodily grounded, non-linguistic cognitive structure with both a situation-foundation as well as an experience-foundation (Skilters, 2011, p. 277). Meanings are generated in merging situations and experiences, and to some extent they are expressible in language – but not linguistic *per se.* However, Skilters (2011, p. 279) adds that "in order to be able to assign meaning we have to have a lot of experiences, perceptual experience and a variety of world knowledge, for example to be able to assign meaning to words such as *cold* or *sweet*". In other words, we must have the

relevant perceptual experience of the word in order to understand its meaning – a relevant matter to keep in mind especially in the context of this research, when the interviewees are assigning meanings to the abstract term "arctic". Also, if we do not have perceptually based experience of the term, we are unable to make metaphorical transformations (such as characterizing someone to be a 'cold' person or using a metaphor 'sweet life') of it. In short, as soon as we perceive something (by processing any kind of stimuli) through bodily experience, experiential representations are activated and we assign meaning to it. Bodily experience is present in all acts of meaning assignment, and cannot be separated from it. (Skilters, 2011, p. 277–279.)

The theory of meaning generation by Skilters (2011) was chosen as a part of the theoretical framework of this study because it describes the process and context in which people give meaning to things they perceive in their surroundings (i.e. when experiencing something). Combined with the theory of sense of place, it provides a theoretical explanation to the way people give meanings and express these meanings verbally in the specific tourism destination of Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi, Finnish Lapland. Also, it offers a deeper analysis of how tourists give meaning to the abstract concept of "arctic", helping the reader to see the connections between the the tourist experience encountered, in relation to the sense of place, and the verbal description of these meanings given to the experience. According to Griffin and Hayllar (2009, p. 128–129) the tourist's experience should be investigated primarily in relation to 'the place' and its inherent characteristics (physical, aesthetic, social and cultural) rather than simply focusing on a tourism product or service consumed.

Especially significant in the conversation of tourist experience in relation to the sense of place is "the experience of being in public space within the place" (Griffin & Hayllar, 2009). Morgan, Lugosi and Ritchie (2010) state, that "individual's sense of place includes both a *collective* as well as a *personal* domain", collective domain holding the meanings of place experienced in the presence of others and the personal domain the individual perceptions of place. According to Suvantola (2002) it is *the experiencing of*

space that gives it meaning, and space with experienced meaning becomes *place.* This is the theoretical ground applied in this research to the discussion of sense of place – the place as experienced by a tourist, given meaning through the experience of space within the place. Griffin and Hayllar (2009) continue that a "distinctive sense of place" is fundamental to the tourist experience, and should not be left unconsidered when investigating tourist experiences.

Choosing a philosophical school of thought focused on study of experiences as a theoretical framework for a tourism research study, searching definitions to the concept of "arctic", might seem illogical. It is, however, the interest on the individual's experience that calls for a theory comprehensively investigating the experiences the tourist is exposed to and which have an effect on the definition they provide to the term "arctic". Including the theories of meaning generation and sense of place, the connection between the theoretical framework of phenomenology and the empirical side of the study are connected. Describing exactly how the tourists are assumed to form their meanings and definitions of "arctic", related to the experience of place, also ensures that the conclusions made in this study are not purely based on my personal subjective interpretations, but also supported by theories and work of other researchers.

4.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis is a qualitative approach influenced by the theoretical traditions of phenomenology and hermeneutics. IPA strives to understand the meaning of human experience (phenomenology) in its own terms and pays close attention to the interpretative activity involved in the analytic process, when people are doing research with people. (Shaw, 2010; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.) IPA has not been very actively applied in the field of tourism, although some studies related to ethical consumption, agricultural tourism, immediate tourist experience, international mobility and recreation have used the approach. A study focused on the understanding of the role of emotion in ethical consumption within tourism (see Malone, 2012) uses

IPA to uncover the participants' subjective experiences, understand their meaning and how they make sense of the experiences. Interpretative research approach was also applied in a study aiming to better understand the complexity of agritourism (see Ainley, Phelan & Kline, 2011). Filep (2011) has investigated tourist experience and immediate satisfaction at tourist sites applying in-depth interviews and analyzing them with IPA approach. Few studies more loosely linked to tourism research investigate urban walking (see Reible 2013) and professional female expatriates (see Fitzgerald 2008), both also conducted with the help of IPA.

IPA originates in the field of psychology. The need for a psychological approach able to capture experiential and qualitative accounts was first acknowledged by Jonathan Smith in 1996, and most of the early work on the approach was done in the United Kingdom. In addition to the psychological field of study, the approach is rapidly growing attention also in the fields of health, human and social sciences. In its original form IPA is focused on the examination of how people make sense of their life experiences, especially when something important has happened to them. These important changes can simply be described as situations, moments or things which the person remembers because they were *an experience*, something differing from the everyday flow of life. Further, when people encounter 'an experience' in their life, they usually begin to reflect on the significance of what is happening to them. These reflections of experiences are what IPA research aims to engage with. IPA is not the only research approach drawing ideas from phenomenology and hermeneutics, and it is not considered a completely flawless approach either. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.)

According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) the experiences IPA research is interested in can occur to people during major transitions in their lives, such as achieving something, becoming a parent or losing a loved one. They can also be important decisions, such as changing one's lifestyle radically, creating ambitious life goals or moving to another country. These decisions can be either well-thought or unexpected, negative or positive. The key element combining them all is that they are

significant to the person experiencing them. These experiential accounts on major life changes have been studied mostly in the field of psychology as well as health science, for instance in studies investigating the impacts and experiences of people who have gone through major surgeries. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.) Can such be said about being on holiday then: is a trip to selected holiday destination, in this context Northern Europe and Finnish Lapland, so meaningful, that it forms an experiential account? Primarily, I chose to use IPA in this research because the detailed method of analyzing the data enabled me to investigate and interpret the tourist experiences thoroughly. Furthermore, without making generalizations, I claim that in some cases the tourist experience of visiting the Arctic really can produce meaningful experiences. The ritual elements recognized in arctic tourism by Grenier (2007) add specific value to the fulfilling of these dreams – such as crossing the Arctic Circle. Emmerson (2010) describes his personal experience, as ten-year-old boy wanting to cross the great line of Arctic Circle, as a great desire – and when accomplished, a great achievement. Also, as the study on experiences (see Griffin & Hayllar, 2009; Skilters, 2011; Uriely, 2005) suggests, meaningful (tourist) experiences are often considered as separate from the everyday life routine. A trip to the Arctic, then, is given meaning depending on the individual's motives of travel to the region: someone visiting the Arctic specifically because of the imagined uniqueness of the place, is likely to hold the experience more meaningful and important than a person more interested in other factors (such as tourism products and services) than the actual location.

Access to an experience always depends on what the person experiencing it tells the researcher about that certain experience. This information then needs to be interpreted by the researcher. As IPA as an interpretative approach aims to make sense of the reflections of the person experiencing the changes, is the theory of interpretation, *hermeneutics*, involved. Interpreting the reflections of the participant can be defined as a *double hermeneutic*, since the researcher is essentially trying to make sense of the participant, who is also trying to make sense of what is happening to him/her. The researcher has dual role in this research setting, as in the situation he/she is using the

same skills and capacities as the participant, with whom he/she also shares the fundamental role of being a human being. However, the researcher is employing those mental and personal skills more self-consciously than the participant. As such, the sense-making of the researcher is second order, for he/she only has access to the participant's experience through the participant's own description of it. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 21–28.) In this research, the double hermeneutics is actualized as I as a researcher am trying to understand the interviewees: tourists, who in the interview situation are trying to make sense of the concept of "arctic". In the interpretation of the interview transcripts I must acknowledge the double hermeneutic setting, since my interpretations of the tourists' definitions of "arctic" initially reach only the verbally described definitions, and the remaining interpretations are affected by my personal understanding of the "hidden" meanings – certain words used or some things left unsaid.

One significant feature about IPA is that it is an *idiographic* method of inquiry. Idiographic analyses are conducted in order to make specific claims about the individuals studied. Instead of creating generalizations using large scale, usually quantitative research interviews, IPA focuses on detailed study of the particular case. The goal is to find out what an experience is like for one specific person, and how does *this* person reflect upon it. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.) The central goal of IPA is to understand what personal and social experiences mean to those people who experience them. In an IPA research, the interviewees or participants are usually being asked to describe events they have encountered or emotions they feel, the core unit of study being an *experiential account*. This is an account focusing on concrete experiences of an individual, and his/her reflections about those experiences. (Shaw, 2010.)

Although IPA has its foundations in psychology, it is increasingly being used also in other fields of sciences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The core concerns of IPA research are indeed psychological, but as psychological matters inevitably connect to

people, and people are the subjects of studies in various fields of science, can the expanded applications of interpretative phenomenological analysis be found also outside the field of psychological research. Although in this research the interviewees were not directly asked about their emotions or special, life changing events they have encountered, the study of experiential accounts is fulfilled by asking the participants to describe their tourist experience of the place, and through this approach define the term "arctic". The definitions received reflect the respondent's experience as well as their inner attitudes regarding the phenomenon of something being "arctic". The interview situation and the different roles present in it might have, however, influenced the tourists' answers, which is something to consider in the analysis of the results.

The study of tourist experiences of "arctic" and the descriptions of these experiences the tourists' participating in the research provide, form a solid basis for the use of IPA. With the support of the theories of meaning generation and sense of place presented in the previous chapter, I am able to investigate the experiential accounts the tourists encounter in Rovaniemi. As research done on motives and processes of travel planning (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014; Pearce, 2005; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007) prove, expectations and emotions are involved in different stages of travel planning and the actual *being* on holiday. Mahika (2011) divides the motivational tourist experience to the phases of *anticipation* before the holiday, *consumption* while on holiday and *remembrance* after returning from the holiday, indicating that the anticipation and travel planning before the actual holiday also has a motivational impact on the actual tourist experience.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis tries to understand what it is like to walk in another person's shoes, whilst acknowledging this is never truly possible, and to make analytic interpretations about those experiences and about the person as the "experiencer". In short, the approach wants to understand an experience from another person's perspective. When doing research using IPA, the researcher encourages the participants to describe and reflect on experiences they encounter. This involves also

thinking what the experiences mean, that is, interpreting them. (Shaw, 2010.) The samples analyzed in this study are considered to be definitions of the experiences the interviewees have encountered in the specific context they are in.

The most common data collection technique when using IPA is the semi-structured individual interview. Semi-structured individual interviews are a method of data collection done by one interviewer focusing on one interviewee at time, the main interest being the individual experiential accounts. The topics or some questions of the interview can be pre-determined, yet there is room for flexibility in the interaction. (Shaw, 2010.) Hence, the decision to conduct semi-structured individual interviews was also supported by the choice of the analytical approach of IPA.

Differing from other qualitative research methods such as grounded theory or discourse analysis, which both work on the complete data set at once, in interpretative phenomenological analysis the data is analyzed case by case. There must be a fully done analysis on case one before moving onto case two, and the comparisons between cases are made first later on. This means that interpretative phenomenological analysis studies usually have small samples to enable the thorough analysis of all of them. The aim of the analysis is to find a reasonably homogenous sample, to be able to examine similarities as well as divergence within the sample. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.) This was taken into consideration also in this study, as the amount of research interviews was narrowed down to ten samples, this way enabling successful analysis of the samples. Since the analysis of the data must be done case by case, it is good for the researcher to keep record of the analytical activity. This so called *audit trail* is a record of procedures carried out during the analysis. It should fully illustrate what the researcher did in the analysis: what decisions or interpretations were made, what aspects were questioned or what reflections made. The audit trail should be so thorough that an outsider should be able to read through it and see exactly how the researcher got from the raw data to the claims made in the analysis, which lead to the conclusions drawn. (Shaw, 2010.)

The interpretative phenomenological analysis should be inductive, or data-driven, meaning that the interpretations are derived from the analysis of the data rather than existing theory. The opposite of this is theory-driven research, which is a deductive form of analysis. In theory-driven research the conclusions are based on whether the analysis fits with an already existing theory, usually stating a hypothesis which is then tested. Once the researcher has read through the data and is familiar with it, they should take two actions: start writing *descriptive summaries* of what the interviewee says, what issues are identified and what feelings are expressed, and make *initial interpretations* about what these issues or feelings might mean. These initial interpretations of experiential accounts are important because they form the first step of interpretative work and are linked directly to the data. As the researcher makes these initial interpretations, he/she can also ensure that any interpretations made later on in the analytic process can be traced back to the raw data. (Shaw, 2010.) This close relation to the data, in this case to the original interview transcripts, was taken into consideration in the analysis, as the suggested steps were followed and each step explained.

After the initial interpretative work is done, the researcher should be concerned with how to make sense of the preliminary interpretations and themes identified. This phase of analysis involves looking for connections between the initial themes. At this stage of clustering the themes it is important to start thinking about the end result, the findings of the research. Once initial themes have been grouped together the next task is to assign titles for these new, final themes. The final themes are derived from the clusters and represent the central concepts in the analysis of the research data. These final themes will be presented as the results of the research and they should provide an answer to the research questions of the study. (Shaw, 2010.) In this research, these final emergent themes were reached applying a method by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), examining the original transcripts case by case, making exploratory comments and identifying emergent themes, and finally, after the whole data set of ten interview transcripts has been examined this way, connections across the emergent themes were

identified. No single right way of conducting this phase of the analysis exists, which gives the researcher the freedom to conduct this part of the analysis with a method familiar to them (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). I chose to follow the example presented above, since it is my first time conducting IPA analysis and I did not feel comfortable of getting creative with the analysis just yet. This choice was made also to ensure, that the process of interpreting the transcripts stays true to the original voice of the interviewees – acknowledging the double hermeneutic setting of the analysis, me as a researcher trying to understand the interviewees' experiences, which they are also personally trying to understand.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis is still a fairly new method of analysis, and it has not yet been very widely used in the field of social sciences. The choice of using IPA in this study is explained by the attempt to understand the individual tourist experiences of "arctic", as well as the way tourists give definitions to these experiences. I believe that credible assumptions of definition-making processes in the field of social sciences cannot be made without considering the psychological factors behind them. Therefore, also the meaning-making theory by Skilters (2011) as well as the contextual theory of sense of place was considered in the analysis. As mentioned earlier, IPA has been mostly used in the field of psychological research, focusing on the collection of experiential accounts, or definitions, of the impacts a change in the subject's life has evoked. IPA is not suitable for all types of social science research projects, and it might be a challenging approach to use even in the ones that it is suitable for. I acknowledge the fact that using an analytical approach that has mostly been used in other fields of science, also includes a risk of it not being suitable for this particular research project. Instead of choosing an alternative method with more scientific background also from the field of social sciences, I have still chosen to use IPA as my analytical approach, adapting it to the needs of this research and critically evaluating its suitability to the field of social sciences.

4.3 Hermeneutics as theory of Interpretation

Hermeneutics is understood to be the theory of interpretation. Originally, it was created for the purpose of interpreting biblical texts, but it later formed into a philosophical theory focused on the interpretation of a variety of texts. Hermeneutic theorists are concerned with matters such as the methods and purposes of the interpretation, the possibility of actually uncovering the original meanings of the author, and the relation between the context of the production of a text (i.e. its historical era) and the context of the interpretation of the same text (e.g. its relevance to present day life). (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.) The reason hermeneutics should be included in the theoretical background of this study is simply its nature as *a theory for the act of interpreting*. It is also its close relation to the field of philosophical phenomenology and especially the *interpretative* phenomenological analysis that support the need for further examination of the theory.

The brief presentation of hermeneutics in this sub-chapter will give a general idea of the theory and field of science, and its relation to phenomenology as well as this study. Hermeneutics has a long history and a thorough presentation and understanding of the theory would inquire much more detailed description than provided here. However, in the context of this research a detailed description is not relevant, for the main theoretical background to the study is provided from the field of phenomenology. The purpose of this sub-chapter is, eventually, to point out the essential linkages between these two theoretical approaches and help the reader to better understand the choice of analytical method in this research, interpretative phenomenological analysis.

The problem of hermeneutics

According to Josef Bleicher (1980) 'the problem of hermeneutics' was born as it was realized, that human expressions contain meaningful components, that need to be recognized and transformed into a system of values and meanings. The problem in this

was not knowing exactly how this process is possible and how can it be done without altering the core values and meanings too much. Conflicting views concerning the problem exist, three clearly separable of those being hermeneutical theory, hermeneutic philosophy and critical hermeneutics. (Bleicher, 1980.) I will briefly present the main features of these three views, acknowledging that much more thorough analysis of the different phases, philosophers and views of hermeneutics would be needed in order to fully comprehend this field of philosophical thought. It is not, however, necessary in the context of this study to focus too much on the history of hermeneutics, but rather to create an understanding of the movement and theory in general, and present its relation to this research.

Hermeneutical theory concentrates on the problematic of the theory of interpretation applied as methodology for social sciences. The central question for hermeneutical theorists such as Emilio Betti and Wilhelm Dilthey, was how to collect meanings and values created by someone else into our understanding of ourselves and the contemporary world surrounding us. The aim was to reach 'relatively objective' knowledge of the meaningful insights of text and thought. Hermeneutic philosophy, then, puts emphasis on the context of tradition: the interpreter and the object are linked by the context of tradition, which means that the interpreter has a pre-understanding of the object and cannot interpret it with a neutral mind. Unlike hermeneutical theory, hermeneutic philosophy does not aim at objective knowledge, but at description of Heidegger's human Dasein in its historical and temporal context. (Bleicher, 1980.) In the context of this research, presentation of hermeneutics is relevant especially in relation to the hermeneutic philosophy, which Heidegger applied in his hermeneutic phenomenology. The background and theory of hermeneutics as an individual movement must, however, be understood, in order to comprehensively understand the ways in which hermeneutic phenomenology or the analytical approach of IPA interpret individual experiences.

Another essential element worth mentioning about hermeneutics is the one of *hermeneutic circle,* a concern of philosophers such as Schleiermacher and Gadamer. The hermeneutic circle is a process of interpretation, emphasizing the need to see the bigger picture of the work as a whole, in order to be able to understand parts of it. Further, as the parts of the whole cannot be understood without some preliminary idea of the whole, the interpreter is faced with the problem of hermeneutic circle of interpretation. The simplified explanation of the hermeneutic circle would be to say that we can understand the present only in the context of the past, and likewise the past only in the context of the present. In relation to IPA research, the "whole" is the researcher in the research process, concerned with his/her personal preconceptions and experience, and the "part" the encounter with a new interviewee, as a new part of the research project. (Bleicher, 1980; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009)

Hermeneutic theorists

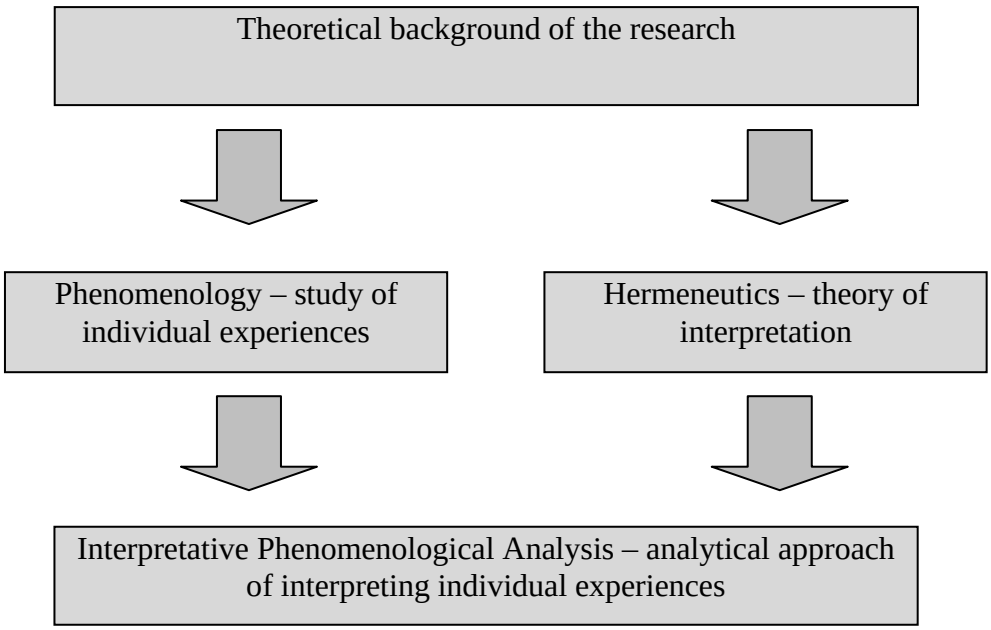
As a theory, hermeneutics is much older and separate field of thought from phenomenology, although its theorists such as Heidegger actively combined the two theories. The three most important hermeneutic theorists are Schleiermacher, Heidegger and Gadamer. Schleiermacher was one of the first people to systematically study hermeneutics at the turn of the nineteenth century. In his theory, interpretation involved both *grammatical* and *psychological* interpretation. While the grammatical interpretation focuses on exact and objective textual meaning, the psychological interpretation is concerned with the individuality of the author.

The person devoted to the creation of hermeneutic phenomenology was Heidegger. In his theory of *Dasein,* engagement with the world and lived time are the primary features, accessible through interpretation. Heidegger was interested in the concept "appearance": for Heidegger, the term holds a dual quality of certain visible meanings to its observer, but it can also have concealed, hidden meanings. In Heidegger's view of hermeneutic phenomenology interpretation is never pre-suppositionless, for the

interpreter always brings his/her preconceptions, prior experiences and assumptions to the interpretation. Following Heidegger's approach to hermeneutic phenomenology, interpretative phenomenological analysis is concerned with the appearance of a phenomenon and making sense of this appearance. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.) The knowledge of Heidegger's positioning in the field of hermeneutics also helps to better understand the idea of hermeneutic phenomenology and the phenomenological methods created for the purpose of interpretation of experiences.

Gadamer was concerned with the importance of history and emphasized its effect on the interpretative process. Much of Gadamer's work was in line with the thoughts of Heidegger, in relation to the complex relationship of the interpreter and the interpreted and the always existing preconceptions. Gadamer criticized Schleiermacher's claim of the interpreter knowing the true meanings of the author better than he/she knows themselves, and set more value to the understanding of "what is being said" instead of solely focusing on understanding the author's meanings as such. Gadamer was also skeptical about the possibility of recreating intentions of the author if the text was indeed very old: the historical gap forced the interpretation to rather be dialogue between past and present. Gadamer's approach to hermeneutics and his critical analysis of the writings of both Schleiermacher and Heidegger brought a fresh perspective to the field of hermeneutics. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.)

This brief introduction of hermeneutics as a separate theoretical school of thought aimed to clarify the connections between the theory phenomenology and the analytical approach of interpretative phenomenological analysis, by presenting the background of the theory of interpretation. By presenting the main concerns of hermeneutics and the theorists that influenced the school of thought, the study gives a more comprehensive look to 'bigger picture' of the theoretical background of this research. As Picture 4 shows, the theoretical background if this research is grounded on the theories of phenomenology and hermeneutics, which have both strongly influenced the analytical approach applied in this research, interpretative phenomenological analysis.



Picture 3 Theoretical background of the research

5. DEFINING ARCTIC

The Arctic has always gripped our imagination. The early explorers who came back from their journeys told the world about a barren land with ice, snow and darkness where they had to fight to survive.
(Larsen, 2002)

This chapter focuses on the definition of the term ”arctic”, reached by analyzing the tourist accounts generated by interviewing visitors to Finnish Lapland in winter 2012-2013 and summer 2013. The empirical data of a total of ten interviews was analyzed using the analytical approach of IPA, following the guidelines of interpretative analysis as suggested by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). Additionally, attention was paid to the previous tourism related study using IPA by Malone (2012), specifically in relation to the write-up of the analysis. In this chapter, the complete analytic process of the application of IPA to the research data will be illustrated in detail from the analysis of each participant's single cases to identification of reoccurring themes, similarities and divergence. The *audit trail* of this particular research, a record of procedures carried out during the analysis (Shaw, 2010), will be provided within the text, after the brief introduction of each step of the analysis. Finally, this chapter will present the results of the research, answering to the original research question *How is the term “arctic” colloquially defined by tourists and what types of meanings do they give to it?* I will, however, analyze these definitions of “arctic” further in Chapter 6, by comparing them into my personal understanding of the term, as well as the Canadian concept of nordicity, in order to create a thorough background research and a comprehensive definition to the term *arcticity.*

5.1 Interpreting lived experiences

Analyzing the empirical data with the approach of IPA can be a difficult, creative, intense and conceptually demanding experience. It is inevitably a complex process, but often it can be an insightful and rewarding process as well. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin,

2009.) As I am applying IPA to a field of science in which it has not to a large extent been used previously, and as a novice researcher conducting IPA research for the first time, significant amount of time was used to the process of familiarizing myself with the approach and its features. Although there is no single right or wrong way of conducting IPA research (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), in my analysis I decided to follow the steps of IPA analysis provided in the publication *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research* by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 79). Also, the thesis by Malone (2012), applying IPA to a tourism related research, was studied carefully to familiarize with the previous applications of IPA. Familiarizing myself with the previous studies and theory of IPA, I will minimize the risk of altering the data results due to my personal pattern of thoughts, or not being able to analyze the data accordingly (i.e. true to the original voice of the respondents). The guidelines of working with IPA will provide a framework for the successful completion of the analysis, and assure that the approach is used in its original and intended way, although applied to a different field of science than in most cases.

Engagement with the data

An IPA analysis requires reflective engagement with the research data, in this case the interviewee's accounts in the form of interview transcripts. The primary concern of IPA is the 'lived experience' of the interviewee, and the meanings the interviewee makes of it. However, the end result is always an account of how the *researcher* thinks the *participant* is thinking – a situation of double hermeneutic described earlier in sub-chapter 4.2. Thus, the results of an IPA analysis are always preliminary, and the analysis subjective, open to change and only fixed through the act of writing. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.) I will present the application of the IPA analysis in this research step by step, starting from the detailed analysis of a single case.

Immersing oneself in the original research data is the first important step of an IPA analysis. The raw data of transcribed interviews should be read multiple times and the

audio-recording of the interview should be listened at least once while reading the transcript, in order to identify different tones and possible hidden meanings of the interviewee, and also simply to make sure that something in the original interview was not left out in the transcribing process. This often quite slow process of going through the data is conducted to ensure that the interviewee becomes the focus of the analysis. The intentional slowing down our habitual tendency for 'quick and efficient' analysis can, at best, allow us to remember some of our initial observations of the transcript. These recollections should be written down in a notebook or a separate document, in order to bracket them off for a while, and be able to fully focus on the interviewee once more. Later in the analysis, these ideas and first impressions can be returned to. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 82.)

In this research, the reading and re-reading of the single cases was done along with the listening to the audio-recording, case by case. Occurring thoughts, impressions and connections were written down in a separate document, and the interview was listened and read through again. The process of bracketing these 'preliminary conclusions' helped to better focus on the voice of the interviewee and allowed me to observe the interviews more objectively. This phase of the analytical process can also be called writing *descriptive summaries*, as Shaw (2010) advised in sub-chapter 4.2. These summaries, holding the researcher's initial interpretations of what is said and expressed in the transcript and what it might mean, are to be kept separate of the analysis. The summaries can, however, help the researcher later to trace any interpretations made of the transcript back to the raw data. (Shaw, 2010.) To ensure that the interviewee's 'voice' is still clear on the final results and that the interpretations were done loyal to the original transcript, I decided to come back to these descriptive summaries at the very end of the analysis.

After the transcript has been read and the audio-recordings listened through so many times, that no new 'findings' can be made, the initial analysis can begin. This, also very

time consuming process of examining the semantic content and the language of the transcripts, requires the researcher to maintain an open mind and pay attention to anything even possibly interesting within the transcript. During this process, the researcher becomes increasingly familiar with the transcript and is able to detect specific ways in which the interviewee talks about, understands and thinks about the issue under examination. This stage of the IPA analysis gives the researcher freedom to analyze the text in any preferred way, for no requirements of certain actions, such as dividing the text into meaning units, exist. The aim is to produce a comprehensive and detailed set of comments and notes on the transcript data. This initial commentary part of the analysis should be conducted closely focusing on the transcript, in order to avoid reading the transcripts only superficially and commenting only the things we expect to see in the text. Only through committed engagement with the transcript is the researcher able to detect the essential descriptive comments, which have a clear phenomenological focus, and stay close to the participant's descriptions and the meanings given to them (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 83.)

The process of initial commenting of the transcripts was in this research done (to some extent) parallel to the detailed reading of the transcripts. After the process of bracketing aside the preliminary ideas, I focused on the more detailed reading of the transcripts, with the attempt to 'see below the surface' of the interviewee's descriptions. I listened through the audio-recordings also at this stage, in order to hear and take into consideration all the possible pauses, muttered words and altered tones of voice. I followed the example of conducting exploratory commenting using a special form introduced by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

Table 1. Process of exploratory commenting

Emergent themes	**Original transcript**	**Exploratory comments**
	R: Okay. And how would you define ”arctic”? I: Umm snow, and cold and uh, yeah ice and.. tundra. R: And when you think of the word arctic what does it bring to your mind? I: Umm, snow and ice and wilderness and um, arctic animals um, the pol...like the ice caps..umm maybe climate change, like when you think of that.. (R=researcher, I=interviewee)	*Focuses on immediate images, nature* *Difficulty of articulating the ideas?* *First repeating few of the initial features mentioned* *Addition of animals* *Arctic as subject* *Hesitation as tries to think of more answers? Looking for assumed ”better” or ”more appropriate” answers to the question?* *Value-giving process??*

In the illustration of this form (see table 1), an extract of the original transcript is placed to the center of the table, the right margin is reserved for the initial exploratory comments and the left margin for the emergent themes. The exploratory comments are basically initial descriptions of the transcript, but they can also include notions of language use, repetition or hesitations seen and heard in the transcript. According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 88.), the process of exploratory commenting may also include a more interpretative level of commenting the transcript. This can be seen as conceptual coding, dealing with the transcript data at a conceptual level. The commenting might also take an interrogative form, as the researcher comes up with

further questions of the interviewee's choice of words or bigger, conceptual meanings behind them. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.)

Table 2. Identifying emergent themes

Emergent themes	**Original transcript**	**Exploratory comments**
Natural elements Natural elements Animals Geology Climatology No social or cultural themes! → Unless climate change seen as caused by people	R: Okay. And how would you define ”arctic”? I: Umm snow, and cold and uh, yeah ice and.. tundra. R: And when you think of the word arctic what does it bring to your mind? I: Umm, snow and ice and wilderness and um, arctic animals um, the pol...like the ice caps..umm maybe climate change, like when you think of that.. (R=researcher, I=interviewee)	*Focuses on immediate images, nature* *Difficulty of articulating the ideas?* *First repeating few of the initial features mentioned* *Addition of animals* *Arctic as subject* *Hesitation as tries to think of more answers? <u>Looking for assumed ”better” or ”more appropriate” answers to the question?</u>* *Value-giving process??*

In the illustrated example of the process of exploratory commenting, I analyze an extract of a single transcript, first making exploratory comments of descriptive nature, then focusing more on the pauses and moments of hesitation and finally forming the conceptual questions (underlined). In the commenting process I was first trying to focus on the immediate meanings and definitions given, and then return to examine the transcript with a more interpretative approach. First after completing these stages I concentrated on the development of emergent themes (see table 2). In the example I also

pay attention to what was *not* mentioned, in this case the presence of human populations or a cultural dimension. In my application of this method of commenting the transcript, I built the table on the computer for each transcript as seen above, and later printed the complete ten tables in order to examine the patterns across cases more easily.

According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) the process of developing emergent themes includes finding the interrelationships, connections and patterns between exploratory comments. Thus, in this part of the analysis the researcher is mainly working with the initial comments, rather than the transcript itself. At this stage the researcher must take a more central role in organizing and interpreting the data, after the interviewee-led phases of data generation and exploratory commenting. This stage ties closely together both the act of interpreting as well as the phenomenological interest to individual experiences. The developed themes reflect both the interviewee's original words and thoughts and the researcher's interpretation of them. These identified themes should already reflect understanding and feel concise to the researcher, in comparison to the initial ideas and comments. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.)

In this research, emergent themes were identified (see the example of table 2) based on the exploratory comments with initial, analytical assumptions, in relation to the interviewee's direct accounts in the transcript. During this process I tried to acknowledge and leave out the preliminary ideas and questions I had bracketed on a separate document earlier, so that I could focus on the individual parts of the transcript without presumptions. After I had identified the emergent themes of the complete single transcript, I read through both the transcript and the commentary once more to make sure I was not missing any relevant information. Then, I searched for connections between these emerged themes to be able to determine which themes are the important ones. These final themes should include the most interesting and important aspects of the interviewee's account, and to some extent, be able to answer the research question of the study (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 96; Shaw, 2010).

After I had analyzed all of the ten single cases following the steps represented above, I was able to move on to compare the exploratory comments and emergent themes across cases. During the process of analyzing the rest of the individual transcripts after the first one, I was inevitably influenced by the findings I had already made and thoughts they had evoked. I was, however, able to leave them aside and allow new ideas to emerge with each case, this way building on the initial interpretations and forming a bigger, clearer picture of the final outcome of the research, already during the analysis itself. It is worth mentioning, that the analysis of the single cases, one by one, following all the recommended phases of the analytical process, asks for time and patience. Other analytical approaches could have analyzed the whole data set by the time I was only half way done with the examination of the single cases. This slow and thorough process did, however, allow me to get closer to the interviewee's thoughts and attitudes forming the lived experience, instead of basing the analysis only on the immediate surface of thoughts. Following the IPA process of analysis allowed me to reach the phenomenological level of studying the individual's experiences and their meaning to him/her in a detailed manner, focusing on the personal experiences of the individual tourists interviewed, and making interpretations of the experiences they described to me in the research interview situation.

By the time all of the single cases were analyzed, I had already doubled the amount of transcript text to analyze by writing down the comments and emerged themes. Now I needed to examine similarities and differences across the cases, and try to find important patterns. As mentioned earlier, I printed the filled commentary tables (including the emergent themes, original transcript and exploratory comments) of each transcript to be able to examine them as if a single case. I used a simple set of marker pens of different colors to highlight the similarities I identified across all the ten transcript tables. Then, to bring the process back to the computer and this research report, I compiled the different features recognized in the complete data set into a table (see table 3) including the number of cases mentioning them. This is not a necessary phase in the process of IPA analysis, but helped me as researcher to visualize the

complete data set as a whole, and also illustrate it as a part of the audit trail to the reader of this text.

Table 3. Recognized features of ”arctic”

Arctic circle	**Santa claus**	**Northern lights**	**Arctic animals**	**Cold**
3	3	1	4	8
Snow	**Ice**	**Darkness**	**Quiet**	**Remoteness**
7	6	2	1	2
Wide region	**People**	**Nature** (inc. beauty)	**North Pole**	**Activities**
3	3	3	2	2

In addition to the recognized features, I also decided to gather the emergent themes or elements found in the data into a table (see table 4). It is important to keep in mind, that these categorizations seen in the tables are not results of the study as such, but they were created simply to ”store” the recognized features and elements of the preliminary analysis somewhere, where I could examine them easily.

Table 4. Categorized elements of ”arctic”

Geographical elements	**Elements of weather**	**Social elements**	**Nature & animals**	**Special features**
Arctic circle	Cold	Friendly	Wilderness	Northern lights
Vast region in the North	Snow	People of the Arctic	Tundra	Santa Claus
North Pole, ice caps	Ice	Arctic expeditions	Polar bears	Climate change
Northernmost part of Scandinavia	Extreme temperatures	Activities in snow	Wild animals	Darkness
Remote, hidden	Frost	Activities in nature	Arctic animals	Wild
Top of the world	Unique weather	Santa Claus	Activities in nature	Beautiful

However, the process of interpretation should go deeper in the IPA analysis, not only focusing on the linguistic level of features mentioned, but interpreting the attitudes and thoughts behind the act of naming these features (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 103). Also, there are different levels of interpretation to be used in IPA analysis. So far, the analytical process has been moving slowly from the *part* to the *whole*, a ”step-by-step progress from the particular to the more holistic”. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 104.) At this point, it was time to shift the direction of the analysis and concentrate on the deeper analysis, detailed reading and interpretation of particularly interesting parts of the transcripts.

Levels of interpretation

In the general use of IPA analysis in the field of psychological research, the analytical process of IPA commonly includes at least three levels of interpretation. In the

examples provided by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 104), the first level is usually a set of *social comparisons* the interviewee makes in the transcript. The second level focuses on the examination of the *use of metaphors.* The third level of the interpretation process is already quite detailed *micro-textual analysis* of the text, concentrated on the analysis of a few words that have attracted the researcher's interest within the transcript. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 104.) To clarify the use of these levels, I will provide an quote from the publication *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research,* explaining the use of the interpretative levels to the reader. In the text that I am referring to, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 104) have just presented an example abstract of a interview discussion, from a study of the personal experiences of chronic lower back pain. In the abstract presented here, the interview discussion and the words of a woman named Linda are used as an example for interpreting the data:

> We would suggest that there are (at least) three levels of interpretation consonant with IPA here. First, Linda compares herself with her sisters and this is part of a set of social comparisons Linda makes in her interview. At the next level, we can examine how she uses metaphor. Linda compares herself with a horse and we interpreted Linda as using this metaphor to exaggerate the strength she had in the past in order to emphasize how weak she feels now. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 104.)

According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) a person conducting IPA analysis for the very first time is not expected to be working at the level of micro-textual analysis, due to the quite sophisticated and challenging nature of it. In the example provided by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 104) the micro-textual analysis revolves around the analysis of Linda's choice of words related to the concept of time and the psychological meaning behind them. It is obvious, that the requirement to see and interpret the psychological meanings behind the interviewee's use of words in the transcript is challenging. Therefore, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 105) emphasize that in terms of the details of a particular analysis, a great variety of possibilities are welcomed.

As long as the interpretations are still closely related to the interviewee's original account, and clearly illustrated to trace back to the individual transcripts, there is room for creativity and adjustments to make IPA analysis suit the purposes of the research data at hand. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009.)

As the presented levels of interpreting the data by Smith, Flowers and Larkin have been designed especially for the field of psychological and medical research, they do not as such fit for the analytical interpretation of the transcribed data of this research. Due to the limitations of these levels of interpretation, I decided to replace them with interpretative goals more suitable for this study. When creating the new interpretative levels I followed an inductive, theory based reasoning, developing the levels based on the previous theory and knowledge I held of arctic research. First of the original levels, identification and interpretation of social comparisons, was changed to *identification and interpretation of social elements* (or the lack of them). This level of interpretation allows me to examine the occurrence or lack of social elements in the transcript, such as the act of mentioning activities *related to,* or matters *caused by* people, and interpret the interviewee's choice of including or leaving out these social elements. This level of interpretation will also help me to link the analysis to the previous studies done in the field of arctic and polar research, and re-evaluate their results and claims critically.

The second original level, identification and interpretation of metaphors, was replaced by a new level of *identification and interpretation of descriptive words*. This level of interpretation focuses on the detailed examination of the adjectives and descriptive words used to describe "arctic", and their meaning to the definition forming process. It is actually quite close to the third original interpretative level by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), the micro-textual analysis of single words, and of all the levels this one follows the theory and practice of hermeneutics the closest. With this interpretative level I wish to take the analysis deeper to the meanings behind the choice of certain words. The way in which the respondents use certain descriptive words can reveal their attitudes or understandings of something, although it is not directly said. By examining

the descriptive words closer, I am able to reach the personal and emotional level of evaluating and describing the experience, as well as the influence of these evaluations to the formation of the experiential account, to the interpretation, instead of simply regarding the mentioned adjectives as an easy result for the study.

The third level of interpretation I chose to use in this interpretative analysis of the data, is *identification and interpretation of distinctive features*. This level focuses on the analysis of certain distinctive features mentioned in the transcript, unique in their relation to "arctic". I will focus on examining features somehow different from the complete body of transcript, striving to understand the purpose and grounds for mentioning these certain striking features. In this part, I will also take into consideration the complete data set of all ten transcripts to see whether these distinctive features are mentioned repetitively. I have loosely based these alternative interpretative levels of analysis to the categorized elements identified earlier (see table 3), in order to stay close to the original transcripts. Also, the previous knowledge of arctic research and theory as well as the theory of hermeneutics affected the development of these levels. Ruusuvuori, Nikander and Hyvärinen (2010, p. 12) present the different stages of all qualitative analysis as a circle, in which the researcher goes constantly back and forth in order to specify and re-evaluate the analysis of the data. In this context, the previous knowledge a researcher holds of a certain topic inevitably influences the decisions he/she makes in the analysis (Ruusuvuori, Nikander & Hyvärinen, 2010, p. 12). The interpretative levels developed are somewhat parallel with each other, and findings from one level can complement the findings from another. The reason I chose these particular interpretative approaches of *interpretation of social elements, descriptive words* and *distinctive features*, and left out, for instance, the study of geographical elements, is because the approaches I created link the interpretative analysis to the field of social science study of the individual's experience of "arctic": placing the focus on the social dimension, studying the region and concept of "arctic" from a social perspective.

I chose to use three levels of interpreting and examining the transcripts more closely due to the amount of transcripts. In my sample of a total of ten interview transcripts, the process of interpreting them is time consuming. I also wanted to keep the interpretative analysis in manageable size, as suggested by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 106), in order to successfully analyze the whole body of cases. Further, using more than the selected three interpretative approaches in the analysis seemed unnecessary, in relation to the ultimate goal of the research: creating a qualitative definition (with a social emphasis on the study of people and their understandings of "arctic") to the term "arctic" by analyzing a small set of tourist experiences, pursuing to understand the way people comprehend the concept of "arctic" in relation to their life world and sense of place. As Malone (2012, p. 101) summarizes, an IPA study is not intended to produce generalizations: instead, it "seeks to produce a clearly situated, circumscribed and transparent account of what has been found within a particular research context". Thus, it can be said that theoretical transferability is the aim of IPA studies (Malone, 2012, p. 101).

In the process of interpreting all the individual transcripts, I followed the general guidelines Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 106) gave regarding larger sample sizes. When the sample size of an IPA study is between three to six transcripts, can the detailed analysis of each case or transcript be done well and the interpretative analysis is manageable. In cases with larger samples, often the analysis of each individual case cannot be so detailed. In such cases, the emphasis of the analysis may shift to assessing the key emergent themes for the whole group of transcripts, or in case the emergent themes have been identified at single case level, the next step of searching for patterns and connections is done first when examining all the cases together. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the possibilities for the structure of the analysis are variant and alternations to the process are welcomed, as long as the recognized group level themes are shown to trace back to the individual transcripts. Examples and abstracts of particular transcripts can be used to prove that the origins of the identified themes are to be found in the original raw data. (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 106–107.) As my

sample size of ten transcripts was slightly larger than recommended, but I had already commented the transcripts and identified emergent themes of single cases, I decided to search for patterns and similarities amongst all the cases, before moving on to the final interpretation.

Regarding the discussions of the validity of research using qualitative methods, especially in the case of applying a relatively new qualitative method to a field of study where it has not been actively used before, few words should be said about the results. The results of this study can be seen to produce descriptions of meaningful personal experiences, meaning-making processes and the life-worlds of the respondents (Malone, 2012, p. 102). These subjective perceptions of the concept of "arctic" provide insights to the way tourists comprehend the term and phenomenon, and the knowledge created can further be transferred to different contexts and applications.

5.2 Interpretation of tourist experiences

As the research and data I am applying IPA analysis to is slightly different from the ones traditionally used in psychological context, I had to adapt the interpretative phase of the analysis to better suit the purposes of a tourism research data. After all, IPA research should always be *inductive*, or in other words data-driven (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In order to stay loyal to the original version of the application of IPA analysis, I followed the guidelines of the analytical process as far as I could, and justified the need for necessary alterations by providing abstracts of the empirical transcript data, this way keeping the analytical process transparent to the reader and close to the original accounts of the interviewees. In an IPA write-up of the analysis and the results of the research, a large proportion of transcript extracts and examples should be provided to the reader, and the remaining body of the text should consist of the researcher's interpretations of these text extracts (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 109). Following this guideline, I will provide the reader with examples of the research

data in the form of transcript extracts, and offer my interpretations of the data, explaining what these examples mean to this study.

At this point, I set aside the initial interpretations and the printed commentary tables with emergent themes, as well as the identified similarities across cases, and focused once more on the close examination of the transcripts themselves. I proceeded in this phase as recommended by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), examining a single, already analyzed transcript with a fresh perspective, aiming to distinguish particularly interesting parts of it and make interpretations of them. In this process I focused on finding the parts of the transcript relating to the interpretative levels of analysis presented in previous sub-chapter: identification and interpretation of *social elements*, *descriptive words* and *distinctive features*. In relation to the inductive research tradition of IPA, these levels of interpretation stem from the elements recognized in the data during preliminary analysis. Before moving on to the detailed examination of single cases, I wanted to provide a bigger picture of the general results of this interpretative analysis, in the first paragraph of each sub-chapter. The following three sub-chapters present the findings of the interpretation, consisting of the identified themes of the whole body of ten research samples, categorized in relation to the interpretative levels.

When moving on to the more elaborate analysis of the single cases, I will be focusing on the detailed examination and interpretation of the original transcripts, paying special attention to the occurring elements of the interpretative levels in the individual interview transcripts. In order to allow the reader to easily see the connections of the original transcript and the interpretations made of it, I will present examples and extracts of the original interview transcripts. The transcripts have been labeled by the season when the interviews were conducted (W=Winter or S=Summer), gender of the respondent (M=Male or F=Female), age of the respondent (i.e. '25') and the respondent's country of origin (i.e. 'Spain'), all of these forming a label such as: (W/F/25/Spain). This phase of the research is actually phenomenological in practice, as the research focus is on the individual tourist experiences. Furthermore, the phenomenological investigation

on these tourist experiences is hermeneutic, as the experiences the respondents have encountered are thoroughly investigated and interpreted. This forms the core sense of using IPA as an analytical method.

Social elements

The social elements found in the data consisted of features such as location, delineations made by man, human activities such as sports, historical events, arctic populations, the interrelations between tourists and locals, and the comparison between home and location visited. Also, the lack of social elements in some of the transcripts was analyzed, in close relation to what *is* said and what is the context, in which the interviewee is forming these answers. Overall, social elements were not commonly mentioned in relation to the description of ”arctic”. In a distinction of the terms ”nordic” and ”arctic”, the latter was more often linked to arctic animals and nature, whereas ”nordic” was without exceptions related to people. The lack of social elements suggests that the term ”arctic” is understood, used and defined in closer relation to geographical, climatological, and nature-based features. This conclusion also means, that the idea people hold of the Arctic region as empty area with no permanent human population, as suggested by Hall and Saarinen (2010a), is reinforced.

As mentioned above, social elements were not clearly linked to the idea of ”arctic”, but rather reflected in the comparisons of ”home” and ”away” by the interviewees. The few social features of ”arctic” were recognized in remarks of the Arctic circle and the surroundings of Santa Claus Village. Altogether, only four respondents of the total of ten mentioned any social features in relation to the term ”arctic”. Only one respondent of the group of tourists interviewed in winter 2013 clearly connected social elements to his image of ”arctic”, describing his personal experience of something ”arctic” in relation to his imagination of arctic expeditions:

Extract 1

> *Umm.. snow walking, like walking through the snow and ice and just like, when you hear 'arctic' you just like, see people on expeditions, that's what you literally - it comes first to mind in your head, it's just expedition, people skiing with their bags and all, you know, covered in frost and stuff like this*. (W/M/26/Lithuania)

The Extract 1 shows, that the respondent clearly links his experience of "arctic" to his personal knowledge of the historical context of arctic expeditions. This notion suggests that he most likely has no previous personal experience of the "arctic conditions" he describes in the extract, and that his "arctic" experience of "walking through snow and ice" is in his mind related to the romanticized picture of arctic expeditions. The lack of social elements in the definitions given to "arctic" during winter may suggest, that the surrounding, "arctic conditions" of winter are strongly linked to the preconceptions and images tourists have of the region and the concept, and the absence of social and human elements in this image is consequently stronger in the winter than in the summer. The notion is interesting in the specific context of Santa Claus Village and Rovaniemi, as in fact more tourists visit the destination during winter than summer, resulting in considerably larger tourist presence in the Santa Claus Village during the winter months. The remaining three remarks connecting social elements to the term "arctic" were all encountered during summer 2013, and strongly related to the surrounding place, the tourist destination of Santa Claus Village.

The interviewees described "arctic" with expressions such as "friendly people" and "good treatment", as well as with notions of Santa Claus and the setting of Santa Claus Village at the Arctic circle. The concept of "arctic" was, however, also understood in relation to people who originate in the Arctic, as one respondent describes: *"Arctic is someone who is living or was born in the..more north part of the world"* (S/M/33/Spain). This definition was the only one relating directly to *people as something arctic* (see also Extract 3). Such social understanding can be interpreted as the interviewee's general orientation and interest towards social aspects of the world,

originated in the cultural background of Southern European high appreciation of social values. The references to people and social contexts are evident throughout the interview transcript (see also Extracts 3 and 4) of this respondent, further reinforcing the notion of the influence of the respondent's cultural background.

The evident absence of social descriptions of ”arctic” raises the question why is ”arctic” not understood in a more social sense? Indeed, the lack of social features mentioned by the interviewees is also something to examine. The lack of social features is interesting and to some extent also contradictory, in the sense that all of the respondents were interviewed in a popular tourist destination, surrounded by people. Again, the respondents' cultural backgrounds and countries of origin should be investigated: can it be, that the sparsely populated city of Rovaniemi, in comparison to the respondents' countries and cities of origin, influences the definitions with a sense of emptiness and lack of people? Perhaps, but another influence even more powerful is the image of Arctic (both as a region and a concept) created by marketing and media. As the marketing of “arctic” and the destinations branded with the term (see Lapland Above Ordinary, 2013; Matala, 2004; Müller, 2012) consistently use the images of snow, ice, northern lights, arctic animals and unique nature, often leaving out the human infrastructure completely, is the image tourists hold of the region inevitably influenced by these selected few elements.

In the research interview, the tourists were asked whether they were familiar with the term “nordic” and if they considered the two term “arctic” and “nordic” to differ from one another. This was done in order to find out whether the ideas the respondents have of “North” and the concept of “nordic” differ from the ones they have of the Arctic region and the concept “arctic”. Interestingly, when asked about the term ”nordic” most of the respondents linked it to the Nordic countries and Scandinavia, clearly associating the term to social elements. It also appeared that to some degree, the interviewees were able to define the term more easily. Further, the term ”nordic” was not connected to any symbolic or abstract meanings the way ”arctic” was, which proves how well established

the term ”nordic” is in relation to the Nordic countries and sports, such as Nordic combined and Nordic skiing. An example below shows how one male respondent articulates his understanding of the term ”nordic” in relation to winter sports:

Extract 2

> *Well I know Nordic Combined, you know the event with the Winter Olympics and the ski jump and the.. ski jump and cross-country, if I remember it. Nordic combined, that's the only way I know nordic [laughs]*. (W/M/37/Australia)

As the same respondent was asked about the possible differences between ”nordic” and ”arctic”, he continued his definition mentioning the Scandinavian countries in relation to the term ”nordic”. A linkage to the social dimension covering winter sports can tell about the respondent's general interest in sports, which may result in the initial recognition of the term only in relation to sports. He does, however, also combine the term with the notice of the Scandinavian countries, but first when the term is presented parallel to the term ”arctic”. Another linkage of “arctic” and sports was encountered in the summer, as one of the respondent described the things the term “arctic” brought to her mind: “*And umm, sport activities, skiing and canoeing, rafting, out of activities in reaction with the nature.”* (S/F/36/Spain). Including the nature-based sports activities, practiced also in the summer, to the examination of the social features connected to the concept of “arctic”, gives a comprehensive understanding how the social dimension of “arctic” is understood through the nature-based activities people rehearse in the Arctic. This also supports the work of Hall and Boyd (2005), suggesting that nature-based tourism is a relevant factor in the peripheral areas of the world, including the Arctic. Another respondent who defined ”nordic” with a clear connection to the Scandinavian countries understands the term in a following way:

Extract 3

> *Yes, I guess, I guess that it's the people who come from the north part of the world, I mean not the most north, not the northest, but the north part I mean like, let's say the Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Norway and Finland.* (S/M/33/Spain)

In the example above the respondent clearly separates the idea of ”nordic” of the one of ”arctic” by stating *”I mean not the most north, not the northest”*, followed by the mentioning of the Scandinavian countries. When the same respondent was asked whether there is any difference between the term ”nordic” and ”arctic”, he continues:

Extract 4

> *I think yes. North, nordic is the people who is of all these countries [Scandinavian countries mentioned above] and all these countries have a north part in their countries and for me it's this part, the nordic [meaning arctic] part.* (S/M/33/Spain)

As the respondent articulates his understanding of the distinction between the two terms, he talks about the ”north part” of the Scandinavian countries, continuing that for him this ”north part” signifies ”the nordic” (in this context either confusing the two terms, or meaning ”arctic”). This clearly distinctive image of both of the terms suggests, that the respondent understands these terms in relation to geographical as well as social dimensions, considering the mental delineations between Scandinavian countries and the northernmost, ”arctic” parts of them, as well as the recognition of the nordic and arctic people living in these areas. “Arctic” as a more abstract term was not given definitions as clearly as the term “nordic”, suggesting that tourists comprehend the term as complex and unclear, finding it hard to define.

When the respondents were asked whether they considered there to be any differences between ”nordic” and ”arctic”, the responses varied greatly. When some respondents

defined “arctic” as the larger circumpolar region in the north (see Extract 5), some had difficulties articulating the differences between these two concepts. One respondent describes his understanding of the differences between the two terms in relation to the geographical circumpolar area:

Extract 5

> *Umm, yes, because there's arctic parts of Canada and arctic parts of Russia, and also Alaska, so like, nordic is uhmm, people that live in a certain region whereas arctic is a, a wider region*. (S/M/33/USA)

Another respondent finds it difficult to describe how these two concepts differ from each other, although acknowledging that there are differences between them. Finally, he defines “arctic” as *“more cold”* in relation to “nordic”, differentiating between the degrees of northernness and arcticity. He also uses a word structure referring to his physical location at the time of the interview, with his words *“maybe it's like this north”*, connecting Rovaniemi more to the concept of north than the one of “arctic”:

Extract 6

> *Should be. Nordic I think is, eeeh, maybe it's like this north, but arctic it should be...more cold I believe, I don't know, I'm not really sure.* (W/M/26/Lithuania)

Few of the respondents did not consider there to be any difference between the two concepts and some had difficulties in describing these possible differences, causing them to simply answer ”I don't know”. One respondent understood ”arctic” to be a more scientific term in relation to the one of ”nordic” (W/F/26/South-Korea). The two most interestingly diverse explanations (see Extracts 7 and 8) of the differences between the concepts of ”nordic” and ”arctic” describe the concepts very differently than any of the other respondents, even providing conflicting views of the the concepts. In the Extract 7 the female respondent describes how for her, ”arctic” signifies a specific place, whereas ”nordic” is the *”more general”* term:

Extract 7

> *Ummm, nordic, for me is a word, umm, more general. Arctic is.. a specific place. Circolo arctico (= Arctic circle) and umm, in Fi[n]land, like umm, is a.. I think is that, the country, more near to the north point, okay. And.. anything else.. nothing else.* (S/F/36/Spain)

The response is controversial with the rest of the identified definitions in the sense that she regards ”nordic” (most commonly identified by other interviewees in relation to the Nordic countries and Scandinavia) to be a broader, more general term, and ”arctic” (identified by some of the other respondents to signify the more general northern circumpolar region, spreading also outside the Nordic countries' context) to be a specific place in the nordic context. However, if the respondents of this research would have formed a more heterogeneous group of interviewees from a wider distribution of countries, could the answers have differed greatly. For instance, the concept of nordicity (and various other north-related words deriving from it) by Louis-Edmond Hamelin (1979) has established a firm ground in the Canadian vocabulary and is used in the everyday common language (both in English and French) to describe the various phenomena conceived to hold a degree of northernness. Consequently, if the study had had a Canadian participant, the distinction between the concepts of “nordic” and “arctic” could have received very different descriptions, for in the Canadian context the term “nordic” is indeed the more general one.

Another, specifically interesting description (see Extract 8) uses the differentiation between people and animals to describe the understanding of the general differences between the two concepts. In the Extract 8 the young Australian woman explains how she connects the concept of “nordic” to the Nordic countries and people, and the one of “arctic” to animals:

Extract 8

> *When I think of nordic I think more so of the countries and the people some selves, when I think of arctic I think of the animals, uhm, you know more so in the uhm, in a, more in a remote sense.* (S/F/23/Australia)

Her description suggests, that she has a considerably clear idea and definition to the term "nordic", as she naturally connects it with the ideas she has of the Nordic countries and people. Her perception of the concept "arctic", then, is presented separate of the social dimension, in her own words *"in a more remote sense".* She connects arctic animals to the concept of "arctic" more naturally then people and human infrastructure. The notion of remoteness is likewise interesting, for such remark of distance should always be examined in the contextual sense of asking *remote to whom?* As the interviewee's country of origin is Australia, the sense of remoteness can be understood as the two countries are on the opposite sides of the world. Her inclination to imagine the concept of "arctic" in relation to arctic animals can possibly be explained by her lack of knowledge of the Arctic populations, and her familiarity with arctic animals, such as the iconic and endangered polar bears. Also, as the respondent comes from Australia, might the geographical proximity of Antarctica (and its lack of permanent human population) influence her answer.

This study suggests that social elements are very scarcely identified in relation to the concept of "arctic". In the occasions when "arctic" is comprehended to have a social dimension, the connections are most commonly made to the Nordic and Scandinavian countries and their population, a phenomenon clearly influenced by the context of the study (Rovaniemi, Finland). I claim, that if the research interviews would have been conducted in various different Arctic countries (for instance, in North America, in one of the Nordic countries, including the islands, and in Russia), would the answers have produced a more heterogeneous definition of the social dimension of "arctic". The lack of social features mentioned in the descriptions of "arctic" also reinforces the observations by previous studies, suggesting that the images produced of the Arctic by

tourism marketing and media influence the way people understand and imagine “arctic” (see Müller, 2012; Hall & Saarinen, 2010b). Accordingly, if the concept of “arctic” is primarily understood to be a remote northern area on top of the world (e.g. in the proximity of the North Pole), might also this influence the lack of identified and mentioned social elements.

Descriptive words

The descriptive words used by the interviewees to describe ”arctic” focused mainly on the climatological features of describing weather and temperature. Descriptions such as “very, very cold”, ”frigid”, ”frost”, “freezing” and “extreme temperatures” were used to describe this feature of “arctic”. These words were also in close relation to the most common recognized features (see table 3) presented in the preliminary analysis: *cold*, *snow* and *ice*. Other descriptive words focusing on the definition forming of “arctic” were terms such as “beautiful”, “amazing”, “cool” (also in relation to climate) and “quiet”. General, positive words such as ”good” and ”nice” were mentioned, and the only descriptive word showing relation to social dimension was “friendly”. The descriptive word ”wild” was used along the word ”hidden”, which can show relation to the perception of ”arctic” as a far-away geographical location considered wilderness, and can also suggest that the interviewee considers no human population to inhabit this 'hidden wilderness'. Also the usage of the word ”remote” is strongly connected to the geographical location, especially in relation to the interviewee's country of origin.

The general image of “arctic”, created by these descriptive words used in the interviews, is a positive one. Although a number of references were made of the exceptionally cold climate and weather, they were too mentioned in a positive sense of creating a memorable experience and sense of adventure. In the Extract 9, an Australian woman visiting Rovaniemi in the wintertime describes her arctic experiences using the word *“exhilarating”,* as if to emphasize the positive and memorable experience created by the drastic change from the Australian summer to the 'extreme' winter conditions:

Extract 9

> *Snow, and ice and cold, freezing minus degrees temperatures, we were at minus 20 the other day so that was pretty new and uhm, exhilarating actually.* (W/F/36/Australia)

All of the interviewees connected the elements of snow, ice and cold weather to the concept of "arctic", both in winter and summer, but not one of them expressed these features in a negative sense. This can be explained by the tourists' desire for adventure and change of the everyday life, motives often identified amongst tourists visiting Arctic destinations (see Grenier, 2004, 2007; Jacobsen, 1994). The cold weather, snow and ice are special features the tourists expect to experience while visiting Lapland in the wintertime, and ultimately make an arctic destination feel "arctic". However, the same features could be used to describe a winter tourism destination, In the summer, the same winter features all still strongly linked to the concept of "arctic", but since the tourist is unable to experience them personally (which may result in a disappointment, if the destination was expected to have such arctic conditions year-round) they are likely to be more interested in the unique nature and nature-based activities. Another respondent, this one interviewed in the summer, defined "arctic" using words *"snow, cold, ice and tundra"* (S/F/23/Australia). When asked if there is anything else she connects to the concept of "arctic", she continued:

Extract 10

> *Umm, snow and ice and wilderness and um, arctic animals um, the pol..like the ice caps..umm maybe climate change, like when you think of that.* (S/F/23/Australia)

Malone (2012, p. 103) refers to the phenomenon of social desirability bias as a concern of any research using participant responses as the data. Basically, the concern of social desirability bias is that the respondents may alter their answers, fearing that theirs is not the correct one, in order to give answers that appear "more right" to them. This is

noteworthy regarding this study, as the respondents, tourists in a holiday destination, are asked by a local researcher to define the abstract term "arctic". Although the interviewees were explained in the interview situation that no right or wrong answer exists, and I am simply interested in their subjective ideas of the concept of "arctic", it is possible that the interviewees have altered their answers to something they perceive to be a "better" or "higher quality" answer. This notion might seem slightly controversial with the previously presented belief of interview transcripts as sources of information true to the respondent's original thought and attitudes. It is, however, possible in all forms of human interaction (including interviews) that people alter their answers for some reason. As a researcher, there is nothing I can do about this, which is why I will view the research interviews as true descriptions of the individuals' thoughts and attitudes, unless there is something in the research interaction that clearly demonstrates the need for closer examination of the transcript. I paid attention to the possible influence of the social desirability bias especially in the Extract 10, as towards the end of the sentence the interviewee appears to modify her definition for a more scientific one. As the respondent is in the specific interview situation asked whether there are any other elements besides the aforementioned snow, cold, ice and tundra that she connects to the concept of "arctic", she begins by listing elements such as snow, ice, wilderness and arctic animals, pauses for a while, and continues by mentioning the clearly more scientific features of ice caps and climate change. Of course, it can also be that these features really are the things she connects with the concept of "arctic", after being urged to define the concept more profoundly.

As mentioned earlier, the words "hidden" and "remote" and the remark of "arctic" being "on the other side of the world" all strongly link to the social dimension, as the person using them refers to the Arctic in relation to their country of origin (*hidden from whom* and *remote from where*). Therefore, I decided to investigate these descriptive words in close relation to the social dimension the interviewees refer to when using these words. Three of the ten interviewees referred to arctic as a place far away, remote or hidden. All of the three came from "the other side of the world", Australia, which makes the

remark of remoteness understandable. A 23-year-old Australian female, interviewed in the summer 2013, describes "arctic" with remarks of ice and polar bears. One might argue that Australia's proximity to the southern polar area, Antarctica, may have influenced her answers, but she continues by mentioning also other features of "arctic":

Extract 11

Cool (laughs). Yeah no, just, it's like, [...] hidden and wild and beautiful..yeah. (S/F/23/Australia)

Her use of the word "cool" can be interpreted to have a double-meaning, referring both to the cold climate and general positive image of the concept and region. The descriptive words used especially at the end of the extract, *"hidden and wild and beautiful",* refer to image of "arctic" as remote, pristine wilderness area, as suggested by Hall and Johnston (1995), who have explained the popularity of the Arctic destinations by their ability to provide a visitor "an image and a possible experience of arctic wilderness". Her remark of arctic as "hidden", then, differentiates the Arctic and Antarctic contexts, as she clearly speaks about the northern polar context as a far-away destination from her country of origin. Also, since she is visiting Finnish Lapland in the summer, the features of snow and ice, strongly related to the idea of "arctic", are not present. When asked whether she has experienced anything she would call "arctic", she seems perplexed with the thought and finally says *"Uh..this? Santa Claus..maybe?"*. Her quite obvious inability to connect "arctic" features to the summer context is a significant thing to take into consideration, when referring to summertime tourism in the region as *arctic tourism*. There was also another respondent interviewed in summer, who clearly expressed his difficulties in articulating his thoughts of "arctic" experiences:

Extract 12

> *Eeh, it's my first time here, and I guess that I still haven't have any experience, have any experience in nordic [arctic], so I mean, eeh, it's not, it's summer, and it's difficult to have any experience as a nordic [arctic] experience.* (S/M/33/Spain)

This respondent, coming from Spain, constantly mixed the two terms "nordic" and "arctic", suggesting that he was not very used to using the terms and that the differences between the two concepts were perhaps not all that clear for him. He was seemingly surprised of the "mild", even warm temperatures at the Arctic Circle. During the interview he mentioned this multiple times, telling how peculiar it is to be wearing the same summer clothes at the Arctic Circle and at home in Spain. His remark of the difficulty of encountering arctic experiences in the summer clearly proves that for him, too, "arctic" is above all a concept understood and defined by its wintery elements. Thus, it appears that Grenier's (2004) remark of arctic tourism focusing mainly on the summer months is contradictory in the case of Lapland, where tourism high season is in fact in the winter, and the tourists visiting the destination in summer do not express to have encountered "arctic" experiences.

Going back to the remark of "arctic as a far-away destination", another Australian female respondent, interviewed in the wintertime, describes "arctic" with the notion of it being "the other side of the world", viewed from her Australian perspective:

Extract 13

> *Other side of the world, coming from Australia, umm lots of snow, not as green as it in here, I didn't think it would be as green, umm, and dark. I knew that the sun wouldn't come up but it's been really dark.* (W/F/36/Australia)

In the Extract 13 she explains her description of "arctic as other side of the world" logically by mentioning her country of origin. As this remark is handled with a mere

mentioning, she emphasizes two other features, obviously remarkable to her, repeatedly. She explains her remark of how green it is in Rovaniemi, although, controversially, being surrounded by man-built infrastructure. This may suggest that her preconception of the destination and the concept of "arctic" was a different, less green (green in this context meaning lots of nature closely surrounding the city, e.g. forests) visual image. She explains how she had known about the darkness during the season of polar night, but was still surprised to see just how dark it is. Despite her surprise of the darkness, throughout the interview she refers to "arctic" with positive notions, talking about her experience seemingly content. I will analyze the remark of darkness further in the following sub-chapter, addressing the distinctive features that separate the Arctic and its concept from others.

I also paid attention to the use of the term "quiet", in relation to the tourist experience of "arctic". A Spanish respondent, in her description of "arctic", repeatedly uses the word "quiet" to express her experience of the country:

Extract 14

> *It's beautiful place for visit, and the friendly… there is friendly people, and ummm... a quiet country, quiet country in comparison to Spain, our country, other country. […] And uhmm, anything else, umm, quiet country, people friendly, amazing in general.* (S/F/36/Spain)

The very notion that she talks about "a quiet country" might suggest a number of things: she might understand Finland as a country to be "arctic", referring to the whole country instead of a certain region, or the previously presented phenomenon of social desirability bias might have influenced her answers. The respondent clearly compares her experiences to her country and culture of origin, Spain, differentiating the two cultural and social contexts. A significant cultural difference between Finland and her country of origin, Spain, can have an influence in her answer. Although from a local, Finnish perspective Rovaniemi as the capital of Lapland is a highly populated city, can

a Spanish person coming from a very different, more densely populated country hold a very different view. Of course, the lack of a fluent mutual language also influences the interviews, as some respondents were expressing their definitions in foreign language.

The descriptive words used to define ”arctic” suggest that the term ”arctic” is closely connected to the climatological definitions describing cold weather and extreme temperatures, including the elements of snow and ice. However, these descriptions were used in relation to positive descriptive words such as ”beautiful” and ”nice”, which further suggest that the element of coldness is not a negative thing, and it can even be something the tourists expected to experience (i.e. elements of adventure and desire for change from usual surroundings, see Grenier, 2004, 2007 and Jacobsen, 1994; MacCannell, 1999) during their visit. The few especially interesting descriptive words used to describe and define arctic, were the ones of “wild”, “hidden” and “quiet”. The word “wild” was used in Extract 11 to describe the respondent's perceptions of “arctic” as a wilderness area, interpreted from the Australian perspective. Also the terms “hidden” and “quiet” were used in relation to the respondent's country and culture of origin: “arctic” was perceived to be a hidden location, from the considerably distant Australian context, and a quiet country from the Southern European, specifically Spanish context. The notion of quietness can refer to the concrete general quietness of Finnish people, or to a more general, wider understanding of Finland as a quiet country. In the latter understanding, the notion of quietness could be in comparison to Spain connected to features such as a smaller amount of population, less traffic and infrastructure, and larger areas of seemingly undisturbed nature. From this point of view, quietness is seen in relation to nature, and its opposite, disturbing loudness is connected to humans.

Distinctive features

The interpretative category of distinctive features was created to be able to examine, whether the data suggests that there are unique features that separate ”arctic” from

everything else. The identified features included specific weather conditions and the phenomenon of darkness, the consideration of ”arctic” as the top of the world, northern lights, the consideration of ”arctic” as something distinctive and fragile due to climate change, ”arctic” in relation to science, ”arctic” as only something in relation to winter and extreme conditions, and the presence of arctic animals such as polar bears.

The special phenomenon of polar night in the Arctic context was presented in the previous sub-chapter, as the Australian female respondent (see Extract 13) found the darkness to be a striking element of her “arctic” experience. The drastic change from Australian summer to the dark, Lapland winter, and the emotions sparked by this change, may have reinforced her tourist experience of the place. Such a strong experience, a situation the person remembers for it provided the experiential account of something differing from the everyday flow of life, may easily form the type of a memorable experience IPA research is created to examine (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The feature of darkness during polar night is a significant, unique phenomenon of the northern Arctic region. It can be easily understood how the darkness in the harsh, arctic conditions has been connected to death (see Emmerson, 2010, p. 56, as he talks about Kolyma, a Russian Far East mining region, used as a byword for death) and mystical features of arctic.

Another distinctive description of “arctic” was the one describing the geographical region as the top of the world. This type of a definition was evident in few of the interviews, in which the respondents were referring to the geographical definition of the Arctic region. An Australian respondent defines “arctic” in the following way:

Extract 15

Uhm, arctic is top of the world basically, so I guess that's sorta arctic, so yeah, the top of the world. […] arctic is more the whole region that covers the top of the world. (W/M/37/Australia)

The definition of “arctic” as the top of the world naturally refers to the respondent's country of origin (more towards the “bottom” of the world), Australia, but also his tendency to understand the concept of “arctic” in relation to the geographical, northern circumpolar region. When the respondent was asked to further explain the thoughts and ideas the term “arctic” brings to his mind, he mentions the North Pole as a reinforcing statement to the perception of “arctic” as the top of the world. Further, he talks about the commonly mentioned elements of snow and ice, but mentions also the northern lights, which he had been able to see during his holiday. Northern lights have been identified as one of the distinctive features increasing the popularity of the Arctic regions and arctic tourism (Hall & Saarinen, 2010b; Rautanen, 2012; Rovaniemen matkustajaprofiilit, 2012). They are also an element actively used in the marketing of arctic tourism destinations (Müller, 2012). Interestingly, only one respondent of the interviewees mentioned northern lights in the interview. As this respondent is asked whether he has experienced something he would call “arctic”, he continues his earlier definition by saying:

Extract 16

> *Yeah I think the weather and the darkness are the two things that I think are very arctic. I did get to see a bit of the northern lights which is nice as well so yeah, (following unclear): so I think those were the things I'd call arctic.* (W/M/37/Australia)

As he summarizes his arctic experiences, he sets special value to the features of darkness and the “arctic” weather conditions. Taking into consideration that he earlier defined “arctic” with the feature of northern lights, in the Extract 16 he refers to them almost indifferently, by stating that being able to see northern lights as a part of the arctic experience was simply “nice as well”. However, the repetitive mentioning of the northern lights still speaks for their importance for the interviewee, as an element of his subjective arctic experience.

Another distinctive element the respondent mentions is the weather, ”arctic” as something in relation to specific, cold weather, winter and extreme conditions. One of the interviewees explains in detail how his previous experiences in the Nordic region have formed his ideas of “arctic”, and what types of arctic experiences he has had:

Extract 17

> *Yes, I've, I've been top of Norway and the top of Finland, and I've been in Lapland in the wintertime and it's very very cold, probably the most extreme temperatures I've ever experienced in my life.* (S/M/33/USA)

Above, the respondent refers to the geographical locations of the northern parts of Norway and Finland, and then the wider region (stretching more towards south, too) of Lapland. He understands his arctic experiences to have formed solely on the basis of the climatological features of cold weather. The respondent's experience of this arctic weather is very strong, as he says to have experienced “the most extreme temperatures” in his life. Such a strong expression suggests that the experience is of high value to the respondent, and he seems to be proud to have experienced it not only once, but on multiple occasions when visiting Lapland and northern Scandinavia. Further, this suggests that the initial arctic experience was a memorable and meaningful one, since the respondent has kept coming back to the region ever since.

The consideration of ”arctic” as something distinctive and fragile due to climate change was evident in the previously presented Extract 10, where the Australian female respondent explains how the term “arctic” brings features such as ice caps and climate change to her mind. As global warming and its irreversible impacts are highly discussed in the contemporary world of ours, it is no wonder that people connect the term “arctic” to the phenomenon of climate change. Furthermore, if the person defining “arctic” finds the cause of protecting the fragile nature of the Arctic important, is he/she more likely to mention climate change as a feature connected to “arctic”. The concept of “arctic”

was also defined in relation to science, especially regarding the delineations of latitude in the example of the Arctic Circle.

Extract 18

> *Mmm.. maybe in the science text book or yeah just in the Santa Village, yeah I can see some Arctic circle or something like that. Yeah not so much.* (W/F/26/South-Korea)

In the Extract 18 a South Korean female interviewed in the wintertime cannot clearly articulate her experiences of "arctic", suggesting that for her the defining of this abstract term is difficult, especially in foreign language. She mentions to have familiarized herself with the concept of "arctic" by reading a science text book, indicating that she understands the term above all in a scientific manner. Describing her personal experiences further, she mentions her immediate surroundings at the time of the interview, the Santa Village and the Arctic circle visible there (although the position of the actual Arctic circle is not fixed, but constantly moving due to the Earth's axial tilt, in the tourist destination of Santa Claus Village there is a painted Arctic circle line on the ground, as well as a blue led rope light hanging in the air, marking the Arctic circle for tourists) as her experiences of "arctic". Analyzing the interviews that regarded Santa Claus, Santa Claus Village or the Arctic Circle as something "arctic", I must acknowledge the influence the interview location might have had to the answers. If the interviews would have been conducted outside the tourist destination, the influence of the surroundings on the answers might have not been as fundamental as it is now. Interestingly, she ends her answer with the sentence "Yeah not so much", perhaps suggesting of her personal conception of the weak value of the aforementioned surroundings as markers of an "arctic" experience. Another respondent who connected the "arctic" concept to a scientific context described the difference between the terms "nordic" and "arctic" by saying: "*Arctic, umm.. I just feel, umm.. that word [is] more scientific, yeah".* In this study, the term "nordic" was more clearly connected to the Nordic countries and seemed fairly effortless to define for the majority of respondents,

whereas the term “arctic” was clearly more abstract and challenging to describe. The phenomenon of connecting the term to a scientific context is understandable, as the terminology and contemporary discussion of the Arctic region is very scientific (natural science).

Finally, the last distinctive feature identified in the interviews was the presence of arctic animals, such as polar bears. Altogether four respondents mentioned arctic animals as a part of describing the concept of “arctic”. In the previously presented Extract 8 the Australian respondent combines the concept of “arctic” to animals, saying: “*when I think of arctic I think of the animals, uhm, you know more so in the, uhm, in a, more in a remote sense”.* With the choice of words “more in a remote sense” she refers to the notion of seeing “arctic” mainly unpopulated by others than arctic animals, as the concept of “nordic” includes the people. Another respondent who mentioned animals in relation to “arctic” describes the thoughts the term brings to her mind as follows:

Extract 19

> *Ummm.. A lot of wild animals and Santa Village and many.. winter.* (W/F/26/South-Korea)

The notion ”a lot of wild animals” is particularly interesting, as she does not simply connect *some* animals to the concept of ”arctic”, but instead *a lot* of them. Also, these animals are described with the additional descriptive word *wild*, further determining the types of animals that inhabit the Arctic. Again, such definition reinforces the notion of ”arctic” imagined as wintery wilderness area, with only a little if any human infrastructure or population to be found. Few of the respondents clearly linked their idea of ”arctic” to polar bears, the endangered animals inhabiting the Arctic regions of the world, often used as icons of protection of the Arctic (for using the images of endangered animals often appeal to human emotions better than scientific figures of global warming). As one of the respondents interviewed in summer was asked to describe the images the term ”arctic” brings to his mind, he answered saying ”Snow,

ice, polar bears“ (S/M/33/USA). Another respondent, Australian female, also interviewed in the summer answered the same question quite similarly, simply stating: “Ice. And polar bears” (S/F/23/Australia). As mentioned earlier, the reason people often link iconic animals such as polar bears to the concept of ”arctic”, is not always necessarily because they *know* these animals live in the region, but more so because these animals are used in campaigns and marketing of the region – sometimes also its protection. Campaigns using animals are effective, since people often tend to react emotionally to them. For instance, the multinational beverage company Coca-Cola worked together with the World Wildlife Fund WWF in their campaign ”Arctic Home” (Arctic Home, 2014), created for protecting the polar bears. Whether such campaigns actually improve the welfare of the animals or simply polish the brand of Coca-Cola through greenwashing, is debatable. However, this example further proves that as the Arctic has become trendy, it is today being used in a number of different contexts to benefit the image of a person or an organization.

These identified features suggest, that certain distinctive elements such as the cold climate, remoteness and arctic animals such as polar bears, all characteristics identified to strongly relate to the images people hold of the Arctic also in previous studies (Hall & Saarinen, 2010a), still remain central in people's imagination of ”arctic”. The understanding of “arctic” as a hidden or remote location can be understood in relation to the background of the respondent, as those originated in far-away countries were more likely to describe “arctic” as a remote destination. The identified unique features differentiating “arctic” from other destinations were the elements of darkness and northern lights.

5.3 Defining arctic experiences

The combined examination of all the three levels of interpretation suggests that tourists understand the term “arctic” most commonly through the elements of winter and cold weather, arctic animals and nature, and its geographical location up in the north. People

are not clearly connected to the conception of “arctic”, and the concepts of “nordic” and “arctic” are understood separate from each other, and occasionally mixed or used as synonyms. As most of the respondents connected the winter elements of snow and ice to the concept or “arctic”, was “arctic” not understood in relation to summer at all. The respondents interviewed during summer had either more difficulties in expressing whether they had experienced anything they would describe “arctic”, or they simply denied having any such experiences, whereas the respondents interviewed during winter connected their “arctic” experiences to the cold weather, arctic nature, darkness and northern lights.

In this research, I also wanted to pay attention to the ways in which the definitions of “arctic” as described by tourists differ from the definitions given to the Arctic region in varying fields of research. The group of international tourists interviewed in the framework of this study defined “arctic” strongly in relation to the scientific ways of defining the geographical area and its climatological features. Definitions describing the arctic weather conditions, snow and ice were very common, suggesting that the perceptions of “arctic” are at least to some extent based on the tourists' knowledge of the climatological features of the region. The descriptions of “arctic” as the “top of the world” were clearly connected to the geographical location of the region, although detailed descriptions of the actual delineations were not presented. The lack of definitions including people or human infrastructure is the single element clearly differentiating the tourists' understanding of “arctic” of the realistic descriptions of the Arctic region as home to around four million people.

In addition to this, I wanted to find out how does the representation and marketing of “arctic” differ from tourists' own perceptions and definitions of the concept. The results of this study suggest that tourists’ understandings and definitions of the concept “arctic” are strongly similar to the images provided by tourism marketing and media. The images commonly used in the marketing of something “arctic” include elements of snow, ice, northern lights and nature (Hall & Boyd, 2005; Müller, 2012). Human

presence is not common in the representations and descriptions of “arctic”, and if such is to be found, it is too related to the heroic survival in extreme arctic conditions, evident for instance in the literature of Arctic expeditions. The features of snow, ice, extreme winter conditions and empty wilderness, commonly identified in the images and projections of “arctic” destinations, caused some confusion in the context of summer, as the tourists could not find these elements in their surroundings. This suggests that the destination image marketing of “arctic” destinations and the elements used in it only apply to the winter context, and should not be used for the marketing of destinations that do not maintain such winter conditions year-round. Accordingly, Rovaniemi as a tourism destination should perhaps not be marketed as an “arctic” destination, and the tourism taking place in the region should not be labeled arctic tourism. However, if wishing to hold on to the projections and use of the concept of “arctic” in the destination marketing, adjustments should be made to the way how the changing seasons are adapted to the image of the “arctic”.

The results of this research reinforce the results of previous studies (Hall & Saarinen, 2010a), that have described how people perceive the Arctic region. Although this research does not suggest that there are major changes to the ways people comprehend and describe the concept of “arctic”, it provides a contemporary look to the ways international tourists understand the concept of “arctic”. Since the interviews were conducted while the respondents were on holiday, visiting a tourist destination in Finnish Lapland, I was also able to analyze whether the respondents perceived their surroundings, the capital of Finnish Lapland, Rovaniemi, as an “arctic” location. Although the results suggest that some relevance between the ideas of “arctic” and the tourists' experiences of Rovaniemi were to be found especially in the winter, most of the respondents did not clearly perceive their surroundings in Rovaniemi to represent something “arctic”. This statement is explained with the evident lack of human presence (humans mentioned only occasionally or not at all) or infrastructure in the tourists' definitions of “arctic”, a notion highly controversial with their physical surroundings, the man-made tourist destination of Santa Claus Village. In relation to the notion about

the labeling of different forms of travel, discussed earlier in sub-chapter 2.1, tourism in Rovaniemi should perhaps not be labeled as arctic tourism, as the perceptions international tourists hold of the concept are not fully visible in the urban tourism destination. Further, I argue that the present-day phenomenon of over-active labeling of services or products as something "arctic" (in the context of Finland) cannot be justified by claiming the labels to fully represent reality. On the contrary, the active usage of the term "arctic" simply speaks of its trendy status in the contemporary world.

The phenomenological framework of this study enabled me to comprehensively investigate the tourist experiences of "arctic", with as specific focus on the individual, lived experience. In the process of analyzing the research data using the IPA method I focused on investigating these experiences from the perspective of hermeneutic phenomenology, which aims to explain the world as experienced by individuals (Kafle, 2011). In the analytical process I was guided by my knowledge of the theories of phenomenology and hermeneutics, which helped me to succeed in the detailed and challenging analysis of the data the way I did. The theory of meaning generation defines *meaning* as something perceptually and bodily grounded, a non-linguistic cognitive structure with both a situation-foundation (meanings are given to something based on a perception of it in a certain situation), as well as an experience-foundation (meanings are given based on the individual experience of something) (Skilters, 2011). In the context of this study, the respondents assigned meanings to the abstract concept of "arctic" based on their perceptions and experiences, as well as the previous knowledge they have of the term. According to Skilters (2011) the embodied, personal experience (such as the experience of coldness, darkness or quietness) is essential to the generation of meaning: in other words, in order to assign meaning to something, in this case the concept of "arctic", the person must have the relevant perceptual experience of the concept in order to understand its meaning. First when the person has formed understanding of the concept, can he/she verbally describe and assign meaning to it (Skilters, 2011). The descriptions and definitions the respondents gave of the concept "arctic" (presented earlier in this chapter) represent their personal experiences and

understandings of the concept. As they verbally defined and described the concept, they assigned the concept with certain meanings they understood to be relevant to it. This leads in to the situation of double hermeneutics, as I interpret these understandings and interpretations the respondents make of the concept. Consequently, the respondents who found defining and describing of the concept to be exceptionally hard, had most likely not encountered the relevant perceptual experience of the concept to be able to understand its meaning or define it verbally. This might be the case if their preconceptions and ideas of "arctic" differ greatly from the experiences encountered in the destination, or if they do not assimilate the concept of "arctic" to their vacation destination to begin with.

Closely related to the meaning generation process is the theory of sense of place. According to Suvantola (2002) a place is assigned with meanings through *the experiencing of space*, and this space with experienced meaning becomes *place*. In order to understand the tourists' perceptions of the concept of "arctic", in relation to their physical surroundings of the tourist destination Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi, Finnish Lapland, as well as the broader context of the Arctic region, must the aspects of sense of place be investigated as well. A "distinctive sense of place" is regarded fundamental to the tourist experience, and should not be left unconsidered when investigating tourist experiences (Griffin & Hayllar, 2009). In the context of this research, Santa Claus Village as the stage for interviewing tourists represents the place located in the Arctic, and is investigated as experienced by these tourists. Although the location of Santa Claus Village represents an artificial place constructed for tourist consumption, it is in this research considered as a stage to the wider idea of place, city of Rovaniemi, located the Arctic. Tourists assign meaning to the place, e.g. form their sense of place, through their experience of space within the place. Again, the preconceptions and ideas tourists hold of the place (i.e. traveling to an "arctic" destination located at the Arctic Circle) before actually experiencing it, influence the sense of place. Importantly, the sense of place cannot, however, be formed without the embodied sense of space experienced, when actually visiting the destination (the *place*).

The tourists' sense of place in the Arctic region and specifically Finnish Lapland influence the meanings and values they assign to the concept of "arctic". I claim, that in those cases where the respondents had clear ideas and understandings of what they perceived as "arctic", their sense of place (visiting the Arctic region), formed by their embodied experiencing of space in the tourist destination on the Arctic circle in Rovaniemi, was strong. Consequently, those respondents who had difficulties in describing, defining and assigning meanings to the concept of "arctic", had perhaps not encountered a strong sense of place during their visit in the destination, possibly because they did not perceive Rovaniemi to be an "arctic" destination. More importantly, some tourists' inability to define "arctic" may result in the conclusion that these people simply did not think about the context of the Arctic region when choosing their holiday destination, e.g. the relation to Arctic region or concept was not a motivational factor. If the Arctic region or the "arcticity" of the destination were not motivational factors in the planning of the holiday, can the assigning of meanings and experiencing a sense of place be found elsewhere, for instance in the values assigned to Christmas tourism and meeting Santa Claus, interest in the Nordic or Scandinavian countries, or nature, to mention few.

Finally, few words should be said about the suitability of the new interpretative levels designed for the purpose of this study. The interpretative levels of *interpretation of social elements*, *descriptive words* and *distinctive features*, were chosen in order to better reach the investigation of a social dimension within the transcripts, to be able to pay attention to the personal ways in which the respondents described the concept of "arctic" and to identify the distinctive features they assigned to the concept. Another justification for the choice of using these particular levels in the interpretation of the data was their suitability to provide answers to the set research questions. The interpretative levels helped me to analyze the research data thoroughly, reaching also the emotions and meanings assigned to "arctic", beyond the obvious level of words used.

6. FROM NORDICITY TO ARCTICITY

The North is more than an area, it is a passion.
(Hamelin, 1979)

In this sub-chapter I will present my suggestion of a social and cultural definition created to describe things perceived "arctic": *arcticity.* This new concept is derived from the similar Canadian concept of *nordicity*, introduced by the Canadian Louis-Edmond Hamelin in the 1960s. In the following two sub-chapters, I will firstly present the extensive research done on the Canadian nordicity. I will present the original theory and work of Hamelin, the creator of the concept, and the contemporary research and applications of nordicity by the few key scholars working with the concept. Secondly, I will present the term arcticity, my personal contribution to the Arctic terminology, to this study. I will use the results of this research, the tourists' perceptions of the concept of "arctic", as well as my personal understandings of the term, as a base to the use of the concept arcticity as a descriptive concept for things perceived "arctic". Finally, I will discuss the need for this new concept, and its suitability to describe things perceived "arctic" in the English language.

6.1 Canadian nordicity

The commonly known and used Canadian concept of nordicity was created by the Canadian Louis-Edmond Hamelin in the 1960's. Hamelin's (1979) nordicity can be described as a degree of northernness, which again can be calculated on the VAPO (Polar valuers) index – another creation of the accomplished geographer and linguist Hamelin (Chartier, 2011; Hamelin, 1979 Wynn; 2009). Hamelin created the VAPO index in the 1960's based on similar, previous work conducted in the Soviet Union. The

VAPO index consists of ten indicators which take into consideration some of the constantly developing human and natural aspects relevant to the defining of north: latitude, summer heat, annual cold, types of ice, precipitation, annual vegetation cover, land access, air access, resident population and economic activity. With the index, the nordicity of any given place can be measured: the polar value of the North Pole is 1000, and as moving towards South, the decreases in Nordic characteristics lessen the polar value. Hence, any place with a p-value greater than zero exhibits some degree of nordicity. Further, based on the polar values and their countable impact on the nordicity of a certain location, Hamelin created a scale of delineations from Near North (>0 to <200) to Middle North (200-500), Far North (501-800) and finally Extreme North (>800), North Pole (1000) being the northernmost end. (Chartier, 2011; Hamelin, 1979 Wynn; 2009.)

The concept of North has varied throughout history, both in its geographical and discursive form. Starting already from the 17th century, the phenomenon of "denorthernization" of the North has meant a decrease in the severity of conditions in the North, caused by climate change, early expeditions to the North, as well as demographic and economic development. When the temperatures have gotten milder and people have explored the regions previously thought inaccessible, has the image of the North altered in to a less-severe one. The second phenomenon is the "receding of the North", signifying the movement of pushing back the boundaries of the inaccessible North, as people desired to go further and further in North – both geographically and in their imagination. (Chartier, 2011, p. 36.)

Hamelin's contribution to the study and interpretation of the North can be summed into four main categories: 1) "North" must be considered a circumpolar entity, 2) a study of "North" requires the creation of specific vocabulary, 3) the boundaries of North are

variable, and 4) the territory of “North” must be understood as the sum of its physical, social and cultural parts (Chartier, 2011, p. 38). In his justification for the creation of specific northern vocabulary, Hamelin presented the concept of “geographical nordicity”, relating to the actual geographical places of Finland, Scandinavia, Russia, Canada, Alaska and Greenland, as well as other places with similar winter-conditions. Using such a variable approach to nordicity, he concluded that although the Canadian city of Québec (where he worked) was geographically not an arctic area, elements of winterity were found there as well, and the concept of nordicity could therefore be applied. Hamelin felt that the French and English language did not have the sufficient words for describing the North, the Arctic, winter and cold (respectively, some of the indigenous cultures of the Arctic have hundreds of words to describe winter and different forms of snow). Thus, Hamelin created a glossary of nearly 200 terms around the concept of nordicity. (Chartier, 2011, p. 38–40.) Hamelin described the multifaceted nature of the concept 'nordicity' as follows:

> Comprehensive nordicity refers to systems of thought, knowledge, vocabularies, intercultural know-how, arts and humanities sensibilities, expressions of opinion, application in territorial, political and economic fields; in short, nordicity denotes the state of a northern country. (Hamelin, 2002, according to Chartier, 2011, p. 40).

Another, simplified definition of nordicity by Hamelin describes it as a “state or level of “northernness”, real or perceived”, and applicable to “northern world in general, each of its parts, as well as to things and persons” (Hamelin, 1988). According to Chartier (2011) contemporary analyses produced in Europe (inc. Scandinavia) and Canada (both in the English and French speaking areas) suggest that “North” is first and foremost a discursive system with components, characteristics, narrative schemata, colors and resonances that can be traced historically. This discursive system is variable in nature, although it has common circumpolar characteristics, as proven by Hamelin with his

concepts of “nordicity” and “winterity”. Grace (2002) proposes that ultimately, we should speak of “North” as the “idea of North”, referring to the various ways (e.g. ideas of North) in which Canadians have defined themselves as northern people living in a northern country. Grace (2002) argues, that such ideas of Canada-as-North have been used to promote national identity and unity, through active use of northern terms such as nordicity. Chartier (2011) uses the concept of *Imaginary of the North* to refer to the same aspects of North as imagined by people. Chartier (2011, p. 41) suggests that creating equivalents to Hamelin's nordicity and terms created around the concept in other languages could be useful in the study of northology and other fields of research related to the North.

To justify the need of studying the North through analysis of cultural productions such as books, plays and art, and the national identity described by the term nordicity, Chartier (2011, p. 45) states that:

> by analyzing and reinterpreting works of fiction that correspond, in one way or the other, to the concepts of “Nordicity” and “winterity”, we are building both a historic framework that takes into account the aesthetics and dominant genres of the works, and a series of manifestations that illustrate ways in which “North” is comprehended, represented and interpreted.

Chartier (2011, p. 47) summarizes the goal of this work to be the ability to grasp the North ”in all its complexity, divergences and diversity”. The simple elements of snow and ice, often used in the representations of the North, go beyond the semantic layer, deeper to the imaginary people hold of the North. The universality of “North” and the elements used to represent it inevitably lead us to question the relationship between the real and the imaginary North. (Chartier, 2011, p. 47.)

6.2 Defining arcticity

The research done in Canada about the concept of nordicity, and its value to the national identity of Canadians, offer a comprehensive foundation to build the concept of arcticity on. In the process of defining the term, I paid special attention to the notion of "arctic" as "the collective imaginary", expanding the investigation of the term to go beyond the definitions given to the concept in the fields of science. I want to examine more thoroughly the the use of the term "arctic" from a social perspective and create the term arcticity to describe the state or quality of something perceived to be "arctic", whether this element is real or imaginary. Further, my goal is to establish a term which is applicable not only to places, phenomena or realistic 'things', but also to people and abstract matters, such images and ideas.

In relation to other existing arctic and northern terminology, Hamelin (1979) called the social degree of northernness and North *nordicity*. Grenier (2007), then, refers to a similar social degree of *polarity*, in relation to polar tourism research. Personally, I find the term *arcticity* to best describe the quality of something understood and defined to be "arctic". In the foreword of Lapland's Arctic Specialisation Programme (2013) the term *Arcticness* is used to describe a similar degree of something perceived to be "arctic" by its nature. However, although the intention is good, as a concept "Arcticness of something" sounds quite awkward. The simple solution of taking a word and adding the -ness ending to it, fails to create an applicable English term of the Finnish equivalent (arktisuus). As the term arcticity is logically derived from the Canadian concept of nordicity, and created as a similar term to describe the different degrees of arcticity of certain things, places and phenomena, as well as abstract matters, social features and people, there are clear arguments supporting the use of the term in the context of the Arctic region. Further, such universal concept is needed as the term "arctic" is

increasingly being used in the public speech and literature. The concept enables people to go further in the way they describe and talk about the Arctic and matters related to it, whether they are matters of social, cultural, political or some other nature.

Just like the Canadian concept of nordicity, could also the concept of arcticity be measured on a similar scale as the one presented by Hamelin, based either on scientific delineations of the Arctic, or certain identified arctic elements. Whether the scientific measuring is relevant or not, depends on the viewpoint. In the context of this study, rigid scientific figures are not the main focus of interest. On the contrary, in this research I focus on finding out what types of qualitative descriptions of arcticity have the research interviewees produced. As the analysis of the research shows, the concept of "arctic" is most commonly understood through the elements of winter and cold weather, arctic animals and nature, and the geographical location of the Arctic region, up in the north. People are not clearly connected to the concept of "arctic", and the terms of "nordic" and "arctic" are quite clearly understood separate from each other – 'arctic' being clearly more challenging to define. Most of the respondents connected the winter elements of snow and ice to the concept or "arctic", forming the significant remark of "arctic" as something not relating to summer at all.

These results suggest that arcticity can be understood to describe arctic weather conditions, snow, ice and freezing temperatures, of an actual location or an imagined place. Based on the results of this study, the different seasons cannot be clearly connected to the concept of arcticity, at least not if the seasons do not represent certain identified features of arcticity, such as snow or low temperatures. Certain animals, such as polar bears, hold a solid degree of arcticity, formed through both the actual and imagined belongingness of these creatures to the Arctic landscape. Arcticity can describe a certain type of nature, often an image of rugged and pristine wilderness, as

seen or imagined in certain regions of the world. The results suggest that arcticity connected to people is mainly based on the *arcticity of the surroundings* of these people, such as the harsh arctic conditions that tested the early Arctic explorers. Notably, social, human-related understandings of arcticity were rare, suggesting that labeling people with the term "arctic" is avoided, and relations of arctic terminology and people are mostly found in expressions such as "northerners" or in discourses of Arctic indigenous people.

Arcticity should be understood as a descriptive term applicable to universal use in discussion of places, things, features, people, phenomena, and even a state of mind, related to the quality of something being "arctic", or the physical Arctic region. The term can be applied as a descriptive word in social, regional, cultural and political contexts, also outside the geographical, scientific Arctic area, in places where phenomena with arctic features occur. As further research of the applicability of the term needs to be made, no rigid regulations of the contexts in which the concept can be used are at this point reasonable to present. Furthermore, as arcticity is experienced differently by different people and different contexts, no guidelines for defining it "right" exist.

The main differences between the terms nordicity and arcticity are mostly preferential: as some regions are more easily understood and defined as Northern and others as Arctic, the two similar terms complement these respective contexts. The development of the term arcticity is relevant especially in the Finnish context, as it provides a framework for closer describing the arctic features so widely marketed. The arcticity of different regions, products or phenomena can now be investigated and explained more in detail, as the relevant term for describing them has been established.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Arctic is not so much a region as it is a dream: the dream of a unique, unattainable and compellingly attractive world. It is the last imaginary place.
(McGhee, 2004.)

This research has focused on the investigation of the concept of "arctic", and the definitions, descriptions and meanings tourists visiting the city of Rovaniemi in Finnish Lapland give to it. The main goals of this study were to reach a better understanding of how do tourists colloquially understand the concept of "arctic", how do they describe their "arctic" experiences and what types of meanings do they assign with the term. Further, I examined how the tourists' definitions differed from the definitions given to "arctic" in varying other fields of research, and how the representations and marketing of the Arctic differed from people's own perceptions and definitions to the concept. Additionally, another goal of this study was to use these tourist understandings and definitions to support the creation of a new concept describing the quality of something perceived to be "arctic": arcticity.

The study entailed a total of ten semi-structured interviews conducted to tourists visiting the popular tourist destination of Santa Claus Village, located on the Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi, Finnish Lapland. The interviews were conducted both in winter and summer to be able to detect, whether the seasons had an influence on the answers. The theoretical and methodological framework of phenomenology supported this research with a focus on the study of experiences. The analytical approach of interpretative phenomenological analysis provided this study the guidelines of analyzing and interpreting the tourist experiences, focusing on the individual accounts. The supporting theories of hermeneutics, meaning generation and sense of place were used to more

clearly explain the connections between the theoretical aspects of studying individual tourist experiences in relation to the interviewees' surroundings, and the empirical side of generating information through human interaction. As many of the theories and concepts used in this study were quite abstruse and challenging, I attempted to explain them and their relation to this study as clearly as possible.

The choices of using phenomenology as a theoretical framework, and semi-structured interviews as a method of collecting data, were not instantly clear for me. The reasoning that led me to use interviews as a methodological tool for creating research data for this study was the desire to reach the unique individual perceptions of tourists. The desire to focus on the individual accounts and tourists perceptions led me to phenomenology, a study of experiences. Finally, these tourist experiences and perceptions of "arctic" needed to be analyzed in some way. In the analysis I wanted to go beyond the immediate level of analyzing the things that occur repeatedly or instantaneously. My background in psychology led me to examine the analytical approach of interpretative phenomenological analysis, and apply the method on this tourism research study. The theoretical and methodological choices I made in this study were not exactly the most commonly used ones, just as they were not the easiest ones to use. I do, however, think that these choices were the right ones for this study, as they helped me succeed in my goal to reach and interpret the colloquial tourist experiences and perceptions of "arctic".

As I began this research I acknowledged that there is a possibility, that the interviewees of this research simply repeat the stereotypical images of the Arctic, provided by tourism marketing and media. I was aware of the risk, that the results of this study might not to bring any new aspects to the previously given definitions of the Arctic region. However, even if this had been the case, I claim the results of the study *would* still tell us something. They could tell us about the reach and effectiveness of the

tourism marketing, the general knowledge people from different parts of the world hold of the northern hemisphere, the possible misconceptions or false impressions and the need for adjustments in the way the Arctic region is represented. There is *always* a result to a study – whether it is a desired one or not, depends on the research goals and data.

The results of this study suggest that in their definitions of the concept "arctic", tourists most commonly refer to the elements of unique weather, low temperatures, snow and ice. Also, specific arctic animals and nature are often connected to the image a tourist holds of "arctic". People and other social connections are not clearly connected to the concept of "arctic", and "arctic" is understood mainly in relation to winter conditions. The tourists interviewed during summer expressed more difficulties in forming and articulating definitions to the concept "arctic", further reinforcing the remark of "arctic" being strongly linked to the wintery conditions. The definitions provided to the concept "arctic" by the tourists visiting Finnish Lapland maintained similarities to the ways in which the Arctic is defined and discussed in various fields of research. Accordingly, also the representations and images produced of "arctic" in tourism marketing and media had similarities with the tourists' perceptions of "arctic" - a matter not necessary all coincidental. The reality, that people always have presumptions of a certain thing is closely connected to the fact, that the previous knowledge people hold of that certain thing inevitably affects the way they experience it. As presented earlier in Chapter 4, this notion is also supported by hermeneutic phenomenology, as a completely presuppositionless mind would not even be able to understand the experiences of the world (Kafle, 2011).

The results of this study might have been different, if the respondents had represented a more heterogeneous group of people of all ages, coming from a wider set of countries.

Interviewing locals and local tourism entrepreneurs was an option as well, but instead I decided to focus on the "outsider" viewpoints of international tourists coming to Rovaniemi, comparing these perceptions to my own. I found the tourist perceptions to be a better source of information to begin the study of "arctic" with, though need for further research is evident. The information provided by this research can be applied in further research, for instance in mapping the perceptions locals and representatives of tourism sector hold of "arctic" as well. In the context of this research the presetting was, that Rovaniemi is predefined "arctic" or connected to the Arctic area in the thinking of the majority is tourists visiting the city. This influenced the research setting both during the field work phase as well as in the analysis, although I was all the time conscious of this.

The results of this study can be applied to adjust the regional and tourism marketing campaigns of destinations similar to the one of Rovaniemi. The results of this study suggest that although both Rovaniemi and Finland are actively marketed and branded with the image of "arctic", little attention has been paid to the tourists' perceptions of "arctic", or realistic elements of the idea produced. Consequently, at worst this may lead in customer dissatisfaction and negative tourist experiences, as the destination image projected does not match with the actual destination. Further, little attention has been paid to the cultural or social definition of the term "arctic", despite its popularity in marketing, branding and even public speech. This study provides a deeper insight to the ways in which tourists comprehend and define the abstract concept, and the meanings they assign with it. This knowledge can be utilized in further research of the cultural and social dimensions of "arctic", done for instance in the context of interviewing the local people, tourism organizations and entrepreneurs, indigenous people or tourists in another destination or country context, asking about their perceptions of "arctic".

I acknowledge that a comprehensive definition of the term “arctic” as understood in social and cultural aspects cannot be reached simply by interviewing tourists, but much more research including wider a scope is needed. Further research should also be done on the concept of arcticity, its applicability to various contexts, and the strengths and weaknesses of this concept. The Arctic region, terminology and ideas people hold of it are still not very broadly studied from a social point of view. However, to begin on the quest for further knowledge, a starting point must be made somewhere. To me, this research marked only the beginning of a journey to the wider understanding of the social and cultural aspects related to the discourse, and the meanings assigned to the dream of the Arctic.

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Annex 1. Semi-structured interviews used in this study

The preliminary questions asked from each interviewee:

-Country of origin?

-Age?

The basic questions (in the structure of the questions asked in all interviews):

-How would you define ”arctic”?

-When you think of the word/term ”arctic”, what does it bring to your mind?

-Are you common with the term ”nordic”? What does it mean, in your opinion?

-Is there any difference between the terms ”nordic” and ”arctic”?

-Have you experienced anything you would call ”arctic”?

Supportive questions and themes:

A set of supportive questions and themes were covered in the research interviews. They related to issues such as:

-Geographical dimension on the Arctic – is ”arctic” only a concept of this specific context of place?

-Social dimension of ”arctic” – are people connected to the image of ”arctic”?

-Natural (nature) dimension of ”arctic” – is nature connected to the image of ”arctic”?

-Marketing of the ”arctic” – is the understanding of ”arctic” created or in relation to the image of ”arctic” created through tourism marketing?

-Seasons of ”arctic” – is ”arctic” related only to one season (winter)?

-The dilemma of ”arctic” – why is ”arctic” hard to describe?